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FROM

Mrs. Gwendolyn W. Parker

.....

.....

VALENTIN AND NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

THE WORKS OF
HENRY KINGSLEY.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF GEOFFREY HAMLYN.

RAVENSHOE.

THE HILLYARS AND THE BURTONS.

SILCOTE OF SILCOTES.

STRETTON.

AUSTIN ELLIOT *and* THE HARVEYS.

MADemoisELLE MATHILDE.

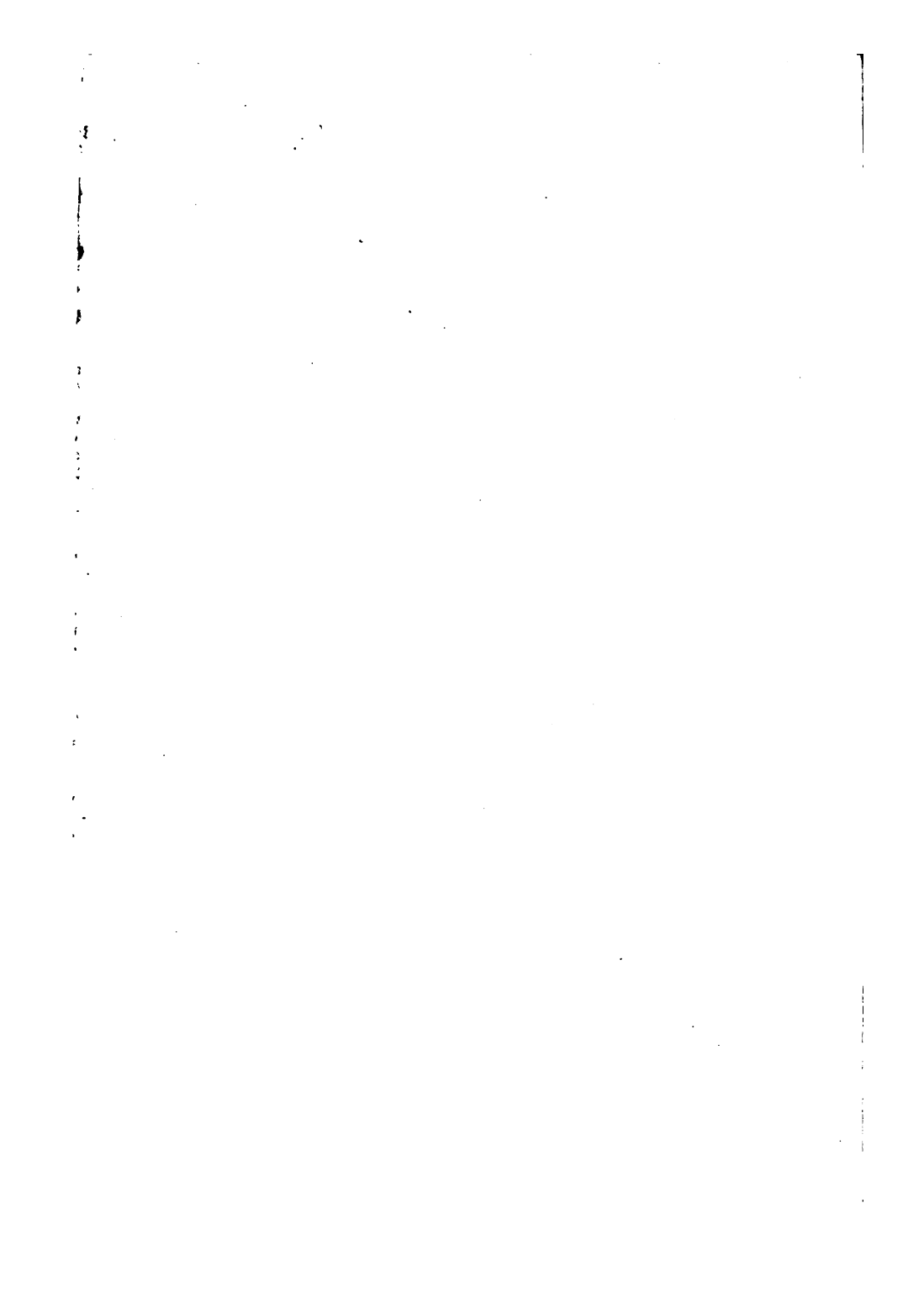
OLD MARGARET, *and* OTHER STORIES.

VALENTIN, *and* NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

OAKSHOTT CASTLE *and* THE GRANGE GARDEN.

REGINALD HETHEREDGE *and* LEIGHTON COURT.

THE BOY IN GREY, *and* OTHER STORIES.





The German officers save Valentin from the wolf.
Valentin.]

(From a Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.)

VALENTIN

OR SEVENTEEN

BY

HENRY KINGSLEY

NEW EDITION

REPRINTED FROM THE EDITION BY F. CATON WOODHILL

NEW YORK

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.,

1890



The German officers save Vale

From a Drawing by [illegible]

VALENTIN
AND
NUMBER SEVENTEEN

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WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY R. CATON WOODVILLE

NEW YORK
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VALENTIN.

VALENTIN :

A STORY OF SEDAN.

CHAPTER I.

My father, at this present moment, in spite of all that has come and gone, is a very rich man. I do not say that he is rich as the English understand it, but he has even now rents to the amount of 48,000 francs a year, about £2,000 sterling. Had he been poor, it might have been better or worse for me, but he is rich even now. I am the only son, and so I have been brought up in entire idleness. I have had certainly a fine education, partly at Metz and partly at home ; but I have never done anything great, simply because I never was taught how to do anything. I am informed that some of you young Englishmen are in exactly the same position ; but it is hard to believe, because I have always been taught that you are so very practical.

You demand my nationality ; I reply that I am entirely uncertain of it. I *call* myself a Frenchman. Still, although the best part of my father's estates are now in Germany, I begin to believe that I have no nationality at all ; I speak German quite as well as I do French. My heart is in France, but my home is in Germany. The English and the Scotch were at deadly war for many years, yet now they are but one nation. You can understand, then, that I, although a Frenchman, have no prejudices ; in fact, I think that the people of the Rhine Provinces are much more intelligent than the peasants of Alsace, Lorraine, and Champagne, but I like the French the best.

When I talk with a good Englishman he will always allow that the Scotch are better educated than the English, but he loves the English best ; may it not be so with me ? I must, however, leave speculation and come to fact. I must, I fear, tell you all about myself, except my character. That I cannot give you, for I do not know it myself. Pasteur Leroi, who prepared me for

confirmation, and started me to school at Metz, wept when I went away, and told me that I was a little angel ; whereas Monseigneur the Bishop of Luxemburg on one occasion, in consequence of my upsetting a chair during mass, while I was on a visit there, had a private interview with me, boxed my ears, and said I was a little devil. So do not you see I am rather abroad between the opinions of these two gentlemen, both of whom are infallible ?

As I cannot give you anything more about my character (I was forgetting again, old Mathilde always says that I am a wehrwolf, which is not true, and she is an Alsatian), I had better tell you all the facts I know about my birth, parentage, and education. I hope before I begin that you will entirely dismiss from your minds the remark which old Mathilde made. I am not a wehrwolf at all ; I am not *afraid* of wolves, I allow that. I have killed more wolves than any young man of my age, but I have let many go because I make them my hunting dogs when I want venison. It is an easy thing when you know how to do it ; still, the reputation of being too familiar with the wolves has been carried by old Mathilde, the pedlar, from one end of the Ardennes to the other, and has done me no good.

At Petange, in Luxemburg, the other day, I brought in a roebuck on my shoulders, from the woods above Longwy late at night, and cut him up in the back kitchen. I wanted a steak cut off it for my supper. Would you believe it, the idiotic landlord sent for the priest and had the meat sprinkled with holy water before he would cook a pound of it ? In fact, I have my enemies, and that old witch, Mathilde, is one of them. She has the evil eye, that woman ; she cursed the Brandenburg Hussars all through the wood by Audun la Tige, *but she showed them the way*. She has not been very poor since. She has taken the auberge at Audun la Romain. I know her ; she tried to ruin me, but she has not succeeded. Having for the present blown off the steam about this most abominable old smuggling pedlar (with whom I hope to be right sides uppermost before I die), I will proceed as quietly as the memory of my unutterable wrongs will allow me. That old wretch, indeed ! I beg of you ! She ought to be ducked in a horse-pond. I was so glad when the Chasseurs d'Afrique caught her and towed her along behind a horse, with a picket-ropes, to show them the line of the Luxemburg frontier. Well she knew it, the smuggling old trot.

You say that I enrage myself in an unnecessary manner about this old woman. Bah ! it is always the way with you English ; you are seldom enraged, but when you are it is to good purpose !

If you say that I am unnecessarily enraged about this old woman, wait until I have told my story, and decide then. I tell you that I hate her entirely.

I was born in Sedan, at the house at the corner of the street opposite the statue of Turenne, as you go towards Bazeilles. My father's town house was there; his country house was at Fond de Givonne. My father was from Trèves, but my mother taught me to speak, and taught me in French, and not in German, as my father spoke generally. She also told me very early in life that the German Rhine Provinces were the property of the French; my father, on the other hand, told me persistently that Alsace and Lorraine—or, as he called them, Elsass and Lothringen—were the property of the Germans. I cared but little for it all then, but I loved my mother better than my father, and so I grew up a Frenchman.

Our accursed fortifications, the things which have ruined us for a generation, if not for all time, were made by Vauban; evil be to his name, he has entrapped more armies than any other man ever did. I hope some day or another that we shall have no fortifications at all, but shall fight as you English propose to do behind your hedges, from point to point, where neither cavalry nor artillery can act, and where an enemy's pioneer who offers to put a spade in the ground is a dead man. I should very much like to see the army which could fight through Kent, so long as you have a hundred thousand regulars, with a hundred thousand sharp-shooting volunteers to back them, and your fleet behind the enemy. But I am talking of your country, not of mine.

In Lorraine and Champagne there is neither hedge nor ditch; you can gallop a horse for miles and miles without one single jump. There is no place of shelter like your continuous English hedges, from which you can fight from point to point, and among which a Garibaldian rabble might beat the best German troops. Our great Revolution (of which you have doubtless heard) subdivided the land so infinitesimally that every half-acre was valuable, and so fences were entirely done away with. While we were on the offensive this did not matter, we had Strasbourg, Metz, Toul, Phalsbourg, Montmédy, Longwy, Thionville, between us and the outer barbarians, who beat us in art and in education; but when we were on the defensive the matter was utterly changed. Our troops were detained to defend these garrisons, the enemy took but little notice of them, leaving but a moiety of their force to mask and to reduce them, while the main stream marched on, after they passed us in our disaster. I am, however, anticipating, though not in an unnecessary manner. Every English boy should

know how to defend his home, and every English boy can learn it. Mon Dieu ! if we French boys had had a Kent or a Sussex, not to mention a sea between us and Germany, this would never have happened. See what you English boys have—liberty and opportunity to drill with the best arms round your own homes ; see that you do so. Let the English boy who will not drill be deprived of other sports. There should be a moral compulsion. You will see why I say this in time.

CHAPTER II.

THE first thing I can remember is the old slope on the glacis of Sedan, beyond the gate which leads to Fond de Givonne. My constant attendant, Jacques Cartier, who was husband of the Mathilde previously spoken of, used to bring me here and lay me in the sun, when I was very little. He was a very good man, and my father trusted him profoundly ; but I remember very well to have heard my mother say that he was not happy with his wife. I know that he was trusted continually with my precious person, and also I know that he kept a little shop by the bridge on the Meuse, where he sold images and crucifixes. His wife was a travelling pedlar woman, even then, and she used to make more money than he did, for I have heard her tell him of it a score of times in the most angry manner. The fact is that she was a smuggler. She put it about that the wolves would not touch me ; I can swear that they never would touch her. I have known her come from Bouillon, over the hill, in the snow on the darkest night.

That side of Sedan towards Fond de Givonne is very pleasant in summer ; for a great part of the glacis is planted with trees, which whisper gently in the summer wind, and where you can play or read, or lie on your back looking up on the summer sky and the few fleeting clouds which traverse the blue sky of Champagne and cast purple shadows on the growing vines. There are nice places also, secret places, between the scarp and counter-scarp, where the flowers grow, toad-flax, purple geranium, wild pinks, and campanulas. Here, on the glacis, one can have great amusement when the boys of the Ecole Polytechnique come out ; for by borrowing the citizens' ladders one can make a real escalade, and get into the casemates and frighten the wives of

the artillerymen who live there. They are mostly middle-aged women, and when we came through the embrasures into their rooms, would throw saucepans and casseroles at us, crying out that we were young devils of the Lycée ; we would eat or spill their soup, on the other hand, which was amusing, though wrong.

Under the guidance of Jacques Cartier, I soon began to go farther afield than the glacis, right up into Fond de Givonne, to my father's country house, on the road to Givonne and Bouillon. I always thought then, and I think now, that this house, lying at the end of the broad dusty street, is one of the most beautiful houses in the world. You could scarcely see it from the street, for it was blocked in by a tall white wall ; but when you had opened the door in the wall, you saw the porch at the end of a long arched trellis-work of the vines of Champagne, brilliant green in the hottest sun, with clusters of dull purple grapes hanging down. Underneath this beautiful arcade grew roses, *Souvenir de Malmaison*, *General Jacqueminot*, *Gloire de Dijon*, your own ravishing English Moss-rose, and your Cabbage-rose. When the vines were bare, and the March wind was shrill and wild, we had other flowers—Violets, Primroses, Crocuses, and Hepaticas. When the vines began to shelter us from the sun with their cool greenery, we had other flowers—Jonquils, Narcissus, and the pale blue English Cowslip, the *Diana* among flowers, which my father had brought with his own hands from Yorkshire, and which not one Englishman in ten knows even by name. In autumn, when the vine-leaves would fall yellow and scar whenever the guns of the fortress were fired for practice, and when the windows would rattle in the still autumn air with concussion, when little Marie would pretend to be frightened, and say, "It is the Allies who come," then we would have other flowers—*Reines Marguerites* and *Chrysanthemums*. But when the vine-leaves began to drop, I cared little for the flowers, because my heart was in the forest, in the old forest of the Ardennes, the forest which your Shakespeare has immortalised for ever.

You will notice, then, that this long alley of vines completely hid the house until you were close upon the porch. When you came face to face with the house itself, you would, were you a stranger, say, "Ah !" and look aloft at the wonderful mass of high sloping roofs, with dormer windows and clustered turrets, the home of innumerable pigeons. The shadowless white château soared aloft into the blue sky most splendidly ; beside you was a fountain, playing night and day in a basin set in grass ; below were woodlands ; beyond was Sedan ; and far away rolled the

glorious old Meuse, like a silver riband, toward Namur, toward Rotterdam, toward the cold northern sea.

"It was a pleasant place in times of yore,
But something ails it now, the place is cursed."

Heaven! how I loved it! My whole life seems bound up in it; every sacred stone of it is precious to me, and it seems quite impossible that it can ever be seriously touched. Strategieally, it is of no use whatever; for it lies in a hollow under the brow of the hill, and its only possible utilisation is for the head-quarters of a general or a crown prince.

Some part of the old house dated from the time of Godfrey de Bouillon, an old and somewhat turbulent neighbour of my ancestors. I have read every biography of that gentleman, but I cannot find the name of my mother's family (did I tell you my mother's family name? no, by-the-bye, I don't think I did. De Quintain, if you please) mentioned in it. The main part of the building is sixteenth century, exactly the sort of building which I see reproduced in Scotland, at Holyrood, at Grandtully, at Weem, and elsewhere; for the Scotch were much abroad, and copied us in many things, notably in our architecture.

I have studied our château at Fond de Givonne; but as our archives were lost in the Revolution, I can make out but little about it. My father is an Alsatian Schneider, and the château came to him on his marriage with Mademoiselle de Quintain; so he cares nothing about the legends of the De Quintains. My mother tells me frankly that she does not know, and that her mother did not know, the reason why on every keystone and gargoyle appears the wolf's head. It is our crest also; but my mother does not know why. Old Mathilde says that she knows, and she knows so much of the wickedness of this world, smuggling old woman as she is, that I should not be surprised if she *did* know. You don't know what an abominable old woman that is. She makes horrible witch rhymes, and pretends that they are old legends. I asked her about the wolf business, and why our house was all over wolves, once when I was very young, and she answered—

"Quintain est mort,
Le loup de Sedan;
Les traîtres dehors,
Et les Prussiens dedans."

She always hated my father, and I am bound to say that the feeling was entirely mutual. I cannot get at the bottom of the

wolf story. I do not say that I have not heard at least one dozen versions of it; but I cannot verify a single one. I have been told, for example, that my mother's ancestor, De Quintain, was a squire of Godfrey de Bouillon, and that he saved him from a wolf at Libramont, and that Godfrey de Bouillon gave him our castle and lands for doing it. About which I do not happen to believe one word, simply because no man of the commonest nerve need fear a wolf any more than he need a fox. But there are two singular stories about these wolves which I will tell, because they were told me by Jacques Cartier, and so I know them to be true.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST, then, as regards these wolf reports, very soon after I was born, my mother was lying with me on the terrace, and a large dog-wolf came up along the gravel path, looked at us both, and then trotted away among the flowers before my mother had time to scream for assistance. Secondly, Cartier left me out on the same terrace, lying on my stomach in the sun one day, and when he came back a she-wolf was sitting on her haunches watching me. At least so he swears. I have seen so much of wolves that I can, on simply scientific grounds, believe a great deal of them. These two stories I most implicitly believe; but with regard to our original connection with wolves, I have nothing whatever to say. I only know that our neighbours at Fond de Givonne used to say, "Don't say anything beginning with an L before a Schneider, or the conversation will turn on wolves." And the curious thing was that there are hardly any wolves close to Sedan; you must go into the Ardennes for them.

I had but little education until I went to the Lycée; I was an only son, and I was what you English would call spoilt. My father and my mother taught me to read, write, and sum; and my father, who had a manufactory of wool in Sedan, told me that I should make a man of business if I would apply, and not go out so much at night. Dr. Tullier used to come and see me at this time, and I rather wondered why, though I liked him. I listened once, and I heard him say—

"Let the boy have his own way; his mind has been abused by these superstitious old women."

"Meaning Madame?" said my father, with a laugh.

"Yes," said the doctor, "and yourself also, and Cartier. You have let this wolf legend grown into the boy's brain; you cannot get it out at once. The boy is a beautiful, well-grown boy, and I will not see him ruined by half a dozen old women."

"Shall I tell the priest?"

"Lunatic! no," said the doctor, "that would be worse than all. Send him to the Lycée; I will speak to young La Roche-jacqueline. When did your boy run away last?"

"Three days ago."

"Did he bring home anything?"

"The old story—a wolf's skin."

"Was Cartier with him?"

"No," said my father; "he disappeared, and he came back tired and worn, with the fresh-flayed wolf's skin on his shoulder and the little artillery carbine under his arm. It is very horrible."

"Not at all," said the doctor; "the little hero!"

Now all this was strictly true, and it was in consequence of these escapades of mine that I got the name of the "Wehr Wolf." I must explain to you how all this happened.

CHAPTER IV.

CARTIER was at the bottom of it all, and I was no more a wehrwolf than you are, though, thanks to my kind neighbours, I got the credit of being one. Cartier had been a Garde Champêtre, and knew very much of what is still the greatest forest in Europe, the Ardennes. Whether he ever assisted Mathilde in her smuggling I cannot say, but I know that very early in life he taught me the use of the carbine, and carried me over the frontier to the farm beyond Château Neuf, where his sister lived with her grand-daughter Marie.

I suppose that the beginning of it all was this: Cartier asked my father if I might stay away for a week with him at the farm beyond Château Neuf, and my father had gladly consented. In this resulted the first great journey of my life. Recall your own first journey, and you will sympathise with me in mine. I was now fifteen years old, and was at school at the Lycée in Sedan.

Our French Lycées are utterly unlike your English public schools. We have far more petty discipline, and far less liberty.

The routine of our education again is completely different from that of yours, and from that of the Germans. The Germans are forced to learn everything; the English learn anything they like; the French are forced to learn, but they are taught very little which is of any use to them. I can match any English boy I ever met in Latin and in mathematics, and can beat him hollow in history; but I never met a German boy who was not my master in really useful matters, such as geography, natural science, and modern languages. Why, German boys can—a great many of them—talk *English*. I cannot. Even now it seems to me a barbarous collection of mere arbitrary sounds, and yet my German friends tell me that it is incomparably the finest language in the world, and that your poet Shakespeare is the finest of all poets for all time. Once more, neither English nor German seem to understand poets like Hugo and Béranger; they say that they are unable to rhyme. I think that the Teutonic races will never understand the Latin.

I have read much about Rugby and much about Eton. From my point of view, they must be absolute paradises. Eton, in particular, would seem to me more like the garden of the old man of the mountain, than a place of discipline. There, they tell me, in a beautiful building, by a beautiful river, close to the greatest palace in the world, are eight hundred boys, who are actually forced to do nothing at all in the way of learning beyond simple class lessons, but who are forced to learn to swim before they are allowed to row in a boat. The story of Rugby, told by Mr. Hughes, reads like an Idyl to me. There is at Rugby force, brutality, and, as he himself hints, vice. We have in our Lycées all three things. I suppose that they are everywhere; but we have very few masters who make friends of their boys, as your English masters seem to do. Your punishments, too, are different, and not so degrading. You are flogged, we never are; you have impositions, so have we; but I would far sooner be flogged than be put *en piquet* for the whole hour of recreation. Your men of Trafalgar were habitually flogged. Fancy a boy of from fourteen to eighteen, nearly a man, being put with his face to the wall of the playground for an hour, in sight of his comrades (who all jeer at him), for one ill-considered word. I tell you that it makes boys desperate, and rebellious against all authority. For me, I would much rather be flogged like any of your noblemen's sons at Eton, and have the degradation over, than stand *en piquet* for half an hour. From what I learn, I think that your English schoolmasters are the best of school-

masters, though possibly not the best instructors. The Frères Chrétiens are very good instructors, but the worst schoolmasters; they care nothing for boys with an opinion of their own, and we most certainly care very little for them.

The Lycée, then, do you perceive, is by no means such an agreeable place as your Eton. I hated it, and when Jacques Cartier called for me at four o'clock one summer's morning, I made a sort of vow to myself that I would never return to it any more.

My parents were both away at Metz, or, as I thought, I should not have got leave for my expedition, as they would have wanted me at home. Cartier gave a receipt for my person, and we immediately walked out to my father's château at Fond de Givonne, from which we were in no hurry at all to start, for we had many things to arrange. I had breakfast in the kitchen with the maids and young men, and they wished to know where I was going, or whether I was going to stay with them. I had bound Cartier to secrecy, and so he confirmed me in the story that we were going to Château Neuf, and, probably, to Libramont. It was certain that we were going to those places, but where we were going after, that was our secret, and we kept it.

I was heir and lord of the family. If I had wanted anything, and it had cost fifty pounds, I could have had it from any tradesman in Sedan for asking, without consulting my father; so on this occasion I had no difficulty in getting everything I wished for. First, I told old Alice, our housekeeper, that I must have two hundred francs, and about that there was no difficulty at all—I wished that I had said more; then I got Louis, my father's favourite young man, valet and groom, to come up with me to my father's study, and help me to arrange for our journey. You will perceive that I did not take Cartier up there. There were reasons for this. Cartier was a Norman of St. Malo (he said himself a lineal descendant of the famous Jacques). My father was more than half German, and although he trusted Cartier, he never would allow him any liberties. Now I was bent on rummaging and ransacking my father's study, and it was possible that he might scold in his mild way, which I did not want him to do; but I knew that if I could bring Louis in for part of the blame, little would be said; whereas, if my father heard that Cartier had taken his black beard into his study, he would be really angry. Consequently, I took Louis, or, to be more correct, Louis took me, for I sat on his neck, with my legs round his shoulders. Poor Louis! my heart is sorry for him as I write. I have seen him and his brother Alphonse strip themselves just as

you do when you are going to bathe, and jump into the wine-vat together, splashing themselves up to the chest with the jets of the red juice. Louis was stained with a deeper red before he went down at Ste. Marie. Well, this is little to the purpose, though, as a Frenchman, I cannot sometimes help thinking of the white feet which I have seen so often in the wine-vat turned up cold to the sky for ever. I beg pardon for this digression, but as a man of Ardennes, the ruin of my country distresses me. We must submit; in fact, we have submitted, but, at least, let us have the sacred solace of lamentation.

Louis and I invaded my father's sacred study, and then he set me down, and we began our raid. The first thing fixed on was an English trout-rod. I have mentioned before that my father made voyages into your Yorkshire, in his business as a wool manufacturer. Well, there he learnt the art of fly-fishing for trout, an art unknown to us. He had partly taught it to me, and so I first desired his English rod, knowing well that no other one was to be got nearer than Frankfort-on-the-Maine, for your English tourists never come our way. But now another want possessed me; I must have his fly-book, for we cannot even imitate your English flies. His fly-book must be in some drawer, and I opened one. There was a large paper lying on the top of everything, and before I could stop myself, I read:

[Copy.]

"M. le Ministre,—I have said all that I have to say. Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, but Belgium to France. I would be glad to know your ideas as regards tariffs in case of the new arrangements being made; but as it is, I am transferring the greater part of my property to Germany. I am utterly disgusted with the course which French affairs are taking, and decline to be nominated. I have but one object in life—to leave my only son rich, and to let him marry well. I shall do that best, I conceive, by putting him at the right side of the border. My son develops French proclivities.—With high considerations,

"GEORGE SCHNEIDER."

I could not understand this at that time. I looked under it, and found the fly-book. I looked through it; the casting-lines were all right, and I was safe with the rest of the paraphernalia which Louis had in his hand; rod, reel, casting-lines, flies, were all right. So far for the fish. Next for the winged game. I could easily suit myself there. I took down my father's breech-

loading Lefauchaux, and told Louis to look about for cartridges. Louis knew where they were, and found one hundred and twenty, that I considered would be enough and to spare. What next? why, I am sorry to say, that small document which I knew my father had, giving the permission of no less a person than the King of the Belgians for hunting in all his royal forests to the high-born George Schneider of Sedan. I was perfectly aware that my father had this permit, and if I could have got hold of it, I fear I should have used it. I could not tell where it was. I consulted Louis, who would have done anything in the world for me.

"Where is it again?" said Louis, laughing; "why, here," and he pointed to the strong box, let into the wall. I asked had he the key? and he said, "No, that the master had the key." I perceived at once I must begin life as a brigand, and really was not very sorry. The King of the Belgians had given my father leave to sport; if I was taken up I could explain matters. And when all was said and done, the French had joined with England in guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. It was as broad as it was long. If we guaranteed their neutrality, a little poaching more or less was no matter.

The next thing I took was a splendid breech-loading carbine, sighted for six hundred yards. The cartridges for this were not so easily found, even Louis was puzzled; but at last they were found in my father's dressing-room. I had now everything I wanted, and I went down to Cartier, Louis and I carrying the spoils, and found him just sitting down to his dinner. He pointed out to me that we could not start until we had dined, and so I had dinner also, among the servants; Alice, the housekeeper, presiding.

"M. Valentin," she remarked, "is going to rectify the frontier of France; M. Valentin is going to push on to the Rhine."

"As was then, Alice?" I said.

"You have taken all the arms in the house, even down to the English fish-spear" (she alluded to the spike on the English fishing-rod).

"We are only going to Château Neuf," I said.

"I have been to Château Neuf," replied Alice, "but I never took two guns and a fish-spear."

I thought that it was wisest to get off without any farther argument, and so I told Cartier that we must be off—Madame Alice looking extremely black, when she had given me the two hundred francs.

Cartier, then a handsome man, a little over forty, carried the sac, the double-barrelled gun, and the fishing-rod ; for my part I carried the carbine only. But when we had got only as far as Givonne (just over the hill from Fond de Givonne), Cartier stopped me at an auberge, where singularly enough was his own wife (she was twenty years older than he was, they said), and she had two blankets strapped up *à la Prussienne*, one of which she put round my neck, and said,

“ Pour le beau contreband
Qui marche à sa mort
Les traitres dedans,
Et les Allemands dehors.”

The old witch left us after this, and I was glad of it. I wonder what could have made a handsome manly fellow like Cartier marry such a creature. I asked my father once, and he said that the old woman knew too much, and that Cartier owed her money. We have no more to do with her at present. Cartier and I went out in the glorious Ardennes forest together, and all care was left behind. I fear I must become confidential here. I fear that I must tell you something about Cartier. We used to call him old Cartier, because we had known him so long ; but he was not forty-five when the day of devastation came on us. I must, however, speak more of his principles than of his personal appearance, or his age ; this handsome man, as fine a man as ever you saw—handsomer than any of you English—was wrong in his principles on one point. He declared that he was no poacher. He was no poacher on French soil certainly, but he had erected a theory that when you had once crossed the border, all morality was changed, and one could do as one liked. I suspect, but only suspect, that it was by his poaching forays into Belgium that he got into trouble with that old witch, his wife, and married her to keep her quiet, but I cannot say. He had no children—I was the only child he ever had ; and I regret to say that as soon as I could walk stoutly, and be trusted to run if required, he took me over the frontier poaching. When I was ransacking my father's study, you will observe that I was very anxious for the permit of King Leopold ; in fact, I knew perfectly well where we were going, and I thought that we should be safer with it. It is useless to disguise from you that I knew that we should not be on French soil that night ; but what did it matter to me ? I had Cartier with me, and I loved him better than all the world, after my father and mother.

And let me be more confidential still. We French despise

the Belgians. When we see you English, who have conquered India, and done many things, treating them as equals, we laugh. You have guaranteed their neutrality, but even with you at their backs we could chase them like sheep to-morrow. Ay, beaten as we are, we could wipe them off the face of Europe to-morrow and make Frenchmen of them. Well, no. We could not do *that*; they are not fit for it. Judge then that Cartier and I conceived that we had as good a right to shoot game in Belgium as you English ever had to invade India. They call me, these cackling neighbours, a wehrwolf. Did I ever shoot a head of French game without authority? Never. Were I an English landlord I would prosecute every poacher at once. But circumstances alter cases, or you English, with all your purism, would not be masters of one-third of the globe now. After this preface of apologies for my first misdoing I will tell you how we fared.

CHAPTER V.

It was a glorious August day when we left the open fields, and plunged into the great forest through a small by-path. I had been in the forest before, but never in this part of it. I was at once lost among the dense copsewood through which Cartier brushed, warning me to follow him at a little distance, lest the twigs should whip back into my face. He walked very stoutly for two hours, and said very little; at last we came to an open space in the forest, where the trees were larger, and then he sat down with me and talked.

"Are you afraid, my darling?" he said.

I laughed, and said, "No."

"Will you go with me wherever I shall take you?"

"A Berlin, si vous voulez," I replied.

"Are you afraid of your father's anger?"

"No, so long as you do not commit him to any indiscretion in my person."

"I will not do so, bien-aimé. But now, are you absolutely certain that you are afraid of nothing, and will betray nothing? The poor are very poor hereabouts, and the poorest make combinations, and I fear talk sad nonsense sometimes; for me I know nothing whatever about politics, I leave them to the

Emperor. We practically pay the Emperor, and he, being a gentleman, will naturally wish to keep his place and his prestige, and earn his money. But there are some, my dear, who object to this rule, and would object to any other. Did you ever hear of the Carbonari?"

"Yes," I said, "they were the charcoal-burners; they were great conspirators."

"Should you be afraid of them if you saw them?"

"Not I. I should like to see them. My father says that France will flourish under a Republic; so he says always, 'Vive la République de 1792.'"

"My boy," said Cartier, sadly, "you do not know of what you speak. France is no more educated for a Republic than I am educated for Heaven. After two hundred years more she might be fit for it; that is to say, when she has got rid of the great curse of the Latin nations—that of lying. But it matters not; we sleep to-night with the Carbonari, and you are not afraid?"

I reiterated that I was not, and then we rose and went on, I walking with greater firmness because I felt that there was a trifle of danger in our expedition. You English had once a great man called Nelson, who, by his dexterity and valour, destroyed two of our navies—the first at Aboukir, the second at Trafalgar. I find that he was not altogether a hero; for at school he stole pears, and on the ice in the Arctic regions he attacked a bear to get the skin for his sister. On the horrible day at Copenhagen, again, he disobeyed the orders of his commandant, won a great victory, and helped to drive the knife home to our heart. I will allow that there never was such a man before or since; but you English call him hero! Well, then, I will not dispute at all, not for one instant. I only say that he was only such a hero as Garibaldi; he disobeyed rules, and succeeded. I, for my part, am neither a Nelson nor a Garibaldi. I disobeyed rules and laws and the respectability of things, as did Nelson and Garibaldi, and so I found myself among the Carbonari. I confess that I should have liked to find myself anywhere else. Nelson was not exactly comfortable at Naples, though he had it all his own way; and Garibaldi was by no means comfortable at Mentana. *C'est tout égal*. I am only a Frenchman; that is to say, a man who has to give continual apologies, and so I say that I was no more wrong in going among the Carbonari than Nelson or Garibaldi were at Naples. We had neither of us any more business in the Ardennes or at Naples than you English have in India or in Australia. Let he who is without sin among you saintly English

cast the first stone at us French. You English are the greatest pirates on the face of the earth, with the exception of all the other nations. You English-speaking races have succeeded, while we have failed; you cannot say of us that we have not tried. Your successes are built on our failures; for example, who was the practical discoverer of your new republic, Australia? Why, no other than La Pérouse. You give us no credit at all; and since Sedan you say that we cannot fight. Our prestige is so far gone that I have actually, as a Frenchman, to make all these apologies before I can tell you of a poaching expedition over the frontier. I am no worse than others. You English, I ask of you, Where are the North-American Indians? Where are the Maories? Where are the native Australians? Can you answer me? I think not. You sneer and say, Where are the Algerians? I answer that they are there still, as we know to our bitter cost in our affliction. Had Algeria gone to the English, the iron heel would have gone down on her neck, and it would have been a case of *finis Poloniae*. Algeria was left for France; and I, as a Frenchman, appeal to you English as to whether or not she has been used well or ill. I think that no Englishman will dare to give me the lie here.

But we will discuss no more now. We are down again, and we must keep down, or we shall be ruined for ever and a day. I have only to tell you a plain narrative as to how these matters came about. If I talk politics, it is only because I think that every youth should know about them. At the present moment the turn of you English is coming, and you must decide.

Cartier and I were together among the fern until the afternoon was far advanced, and the sun was only illuminating the very highest boughs. I spent my time in gathering flowers, and packing them away in a tin box, for the purpose of taking them home to dry them. I knew something of botany, and loved it; and I also knew something of entomology. I rambled about in the wood, and of flowers I got *Impatiens noli me tangere*, and *Colchicum autumnale*, not to mention several geraniums, and a fern which is rare with us, and rarer with you, *Botrychium lunaria*, which I found on a rock. Of butterflies I got some which would make your mouth water in England; for example, the Purple Emperor, which with us flies low, whereas you only get it on the tops of trees; the White Admiral, a fly very rarely seen with you; and, prize of all prizes, the Vannessa Apollo, a gigantic white butterfly, with a peacock's eye in the centre of his wing—a fly which you English have not at all. When I got this last prize, I returned to Cartier, who was smoking at the

foot of a tree. I showed him the Apollo and my flowers; but he was not at all enthusiastic. He told me to cast all that rubbish away, for that we had a very long journey before us.

"Where do we go, then?" I asked.

"Possibly to Cologne," he answered, quite quietly.

"But is not that the capital of Prussia?" I asked, with that ignorance of geography which has cost our countrymen so much.

"My pretty one," he said, "we are bound on a long and dangerous expedition. Believe one thing, that if you acquit yourself well your father will not be very angry."

"Does he consent, then?"

"Could you have been here if he did not? But I have said too much already. Throw those flowers away, and we will go sleep with the Carbonari. Bear yourself bravely; and remember this—any indiscretion which you commit will be visited, not on you, but on me. You are safe, I am not."

"But, Cartier, my dear," I said, "why are you in danger?"

"Can I trust you?"

"To death."

"Then I will tell you. I am a spy."

"That is extremely charming," I said; "that suits me entirely. You are sent, then, to outwit the Prussians?"

"I am sent," he said, quietly, "to gain information. I do not know what your father will say about my taking you with me, nor do I care. I think that you will be useful, and besides, I love you like my own son. You can go back now if you will."

I said at once, "I will go, and so long as I am not asked to lie, or to do anything dishonourable, I will stay with you to the death." I had read of Major André, and I thought that a bold and clever spy was one of the most noble of men.

"You see," said Cartier, slowly, "this sudden *débâcle* of Austria at Sadowa renders it necessary that we should look to ourselves. The English are totally useless, they could not help us if they would. Prussia has destroyed Austria, and she may come to our doors next. Somebody wants to know facts about the Prussian army which he could never get from our French press, and he has sent me. Somebody invests rather heavily in foreign funds, and so I suppose that somebody wants private intelligence.

I nodded; I quite understood.

"You will rarely sleep in a house. You must lie out with me. You understand that?"

The delight of sleeping in the open air was so romantically pleasant to me that I begged him to say no more. He rose, we

shouldered our impedimenta, and I followed him through the wood upwards, until we came to a little spring which welled up through the grass at the foot of a large rock. I stooped and drank; and as I got up Cartier put his hand on my shoulder and said,

"Will you follow that stream down?"

"Yes."

"To the end?"

"Yes; but whither would it lead me?"

"To Rotterdam."

"But that is in Holland."

"It is one of the springs of the Meuse," he said, "and it leads you into a free country—a country which would perish under its own sea sooner than give up its freedom. Did you notice that little stream which we crossed when we first came into the forest?"

"Yes."

"That stream goes into the Moselle, and into German territory—into the territory of a nation who will barter freedom for power. I think much, my beloved, and I am not sure whether I would be a Frenchman or a German; but see, when the wars come, the ruin all falls upon us who live on the watershed."

We followed the trickling little burn down through the trees and the copsewood, until it formed a larger stream, swirling over gravel and lying in deep pools under alder stems. When we got to the first meadow I put down my pack, and took out the English trout-rod, for the water was dimpled every half minute by rising trout.

"I can catch fish here," I said, "in the English way which I have learned. Will you wait for me?"

"I will go on to the charcoal-burners," he said. "Follow the stream down; if you are late I will come to meet you;" and so he departed.

It was just the best hour of the day, and I put my tackle together very rapidly. I was perfectly sure of fish, and I used only one fly, what you call a red palmer, though no monk I know of, not even in Belgium, is dressed in that peculiar red and black. I had not cast half a dozen times when I saw that whirl and splash in the water which every good fisherman loves; I had hold of a splendid trout over an English pound in weight. I kept him out of the weeds, and in two minutes had him gasping on the grass.

I went on with more and more success. I had my basket well lined with trout, when a circumstance occurred, which is not very

pleasant for me to recall, but which must be set down nevertheless.

Coming to a long, rapid shallow, ending in a large pool, I saw fish rising on the shallow which were evidently not trout. I tried them with my red palmer, but they would not take. They *moved* to the fly, but it seemed too large for them. What these fish were I did not know, but I determined to have one of them; and taking out my father's fly-book, I sat down to consider.

I was in a deep glen, and only the tops of the highest trees were lit up by the sun. Opposite me was a cliff of broken slate, nearly covered with copsewood of oak, and as I sat down, some of the broken slate rattled, and fell down, but I took no notice at all.

I found a fly in my father's book, a very small one, which was marked "blue dun." I put that on, and threw over the heads of these mysterious fish; the very first one took, and when I had him on the grass I found that he was a fish I had never seen before—a *Thymallus*, a grayling. I had read that these fish smelt like violets, and I knelt down to smell him at once. There was another rattle in the crags on the other side of the stream, but I was so enchanted with my grayling that I took no notice.

I caught six or seven of these most beautiful salmonidæ, and then I heard the plunge of a great trout in the pool below me. I changed my fly at once, and approached him with my old red palmer, determining that one or other of us should be master or man, and that I was not going to be the man if I could help it. Again the slate on the other side of the stream broke and fell, and looking up more carefully, I saw a large brown dog hidden among the fern.

I thought that it must be one of the charcoal-burners' dogs, and I cried to him, "You go home, sir; you will catch it" (you will have punishment, in French); but he did not go, and I did not care, because I wanted my trout.

My trout rose like a gentleman, but he was too strong for me. He broke my line, and went in under an alder stump. I could see my line on the weeds, and I was determined to have that and, if possible, my trout. I stripped myself naked and went in, and, as I did so, the brown dog on the other side set up a terrific howling. I never had as yet heard such a noise. It was like "Loup, Loup, Loup, Loup-garou!" My attention, however, was fixed on my tackle and my trout. I followed my line until I got hold of my trout and threw him, a noble two-pounder, out on the grass. Then I knelt down, naked as I was, to look at him.

Sudden as the attack on La Chapelle, a pistol-shot went over

my head, followed by a howl from the other side of the stream. I started up, all bare as I was, with my hands to my ears. Two horsemen were behind me in the gathering gloom, one of whom was wiping an American or English revolver with his handkerchief.

We French are quicker than you English. I apologised at once. "You were not shooting at me, monsieur?" I said; "and I apologise for being naked. I am a gentleman, though in my present state of costume it would be impossible to see whether I was or not."

"I did not fire on you, my boy," said one, in what I thought the Alsatian accent; "I fired at that wolf opposite. The beast was watching you, and without your clothes you would have been a dead boy in three minutes. Are you man, or are you a wehrwolf?"

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," I said, dressing rapidly. "I thought that it was a sheep-dog. Will you accept a trout from me?"

"Potztausend," said the other, laughing, "we must not take his trout; we must push for Longwy." He spoke in an odd kind of German, which I thought was Alsatian.

"Parlez Français, s'il vous plaît, mon Colonel," said the other. "Young gentleman, can you give us the route to Longwy?"

I replied that it was a very long way off.

"I know," said the first man; "but is there no road through the forest?"

"There is none," I said, "through which you could drag a gun;" for, do you see, I had seen our own artillery in practice, and I have lived to see six hundred guns piled together in our own trenches. Where you can get a gun you can get anything; and so I used that form of speech.

"Little wretch!" said the more silent of the two horsemen; but his companion said, "By no means; he has given a thousand pounds' worth of intelligence, von Alvenstein. It will be utterly impossible for us to offer our right in these forests, without violating the neutrality of both Luxemburg and Belgium; and as it will be equally impossible for them to offer their left, Saarbruck and Colmar are the words."

"You need not talk before this little French boy," said von Alvenstein; "you were correcting me just now."

And so they rode off; and I was more than ever determined to go on with Cartier, because I was sure that, if we *were* spies, there were plenty of spies on the other side.

CHAPTER VI.

I CONFESS entirely that I was very much terrified by the sudden appearance of these two terrible Germans ; they came on me so very suddenly, and looked so very dreadful against the sunset sky with their long blue cloaks. The pistol-shot, too, had startled me a great deal, and I was all alone and naked, with a wolf watching me from the other side of the stream. I had always heard of the Germans from my mother as men who spoke a barbarous tongue not pronounceable by French lips, who were utterly cruel in war, and who had assisted the English to destroy us at Waterloo late in the day. I had the strongest horror of the Germans at the time, although my own father was one of them ; and so I gathered up my fish, put them in the basket, and walked down the stream to rejoin Cartier, thinking, meanwhile, of all the stories I had heard about them. I learnt more when I got to school at Metz, but just now I thought more of what my mother had told me of them than what my father had.

My mother told me that they were a nation of wretches, and that the only one who was likely to be saved ultimately was my father, who was of Alsatian extraction. The English, she said, were most excellent people, but hopelessly stupid—only fit to fight after all hope of a scientific victory was gone, and so won battles more especially by sea. They were also Protestants, which was an objection. Now, my father gave me an entirely different account of the two nations. He said that the Germans were beating the French hand over hand in literature, art, and war ; and that when our miserable Chauvinism was dead and forgotten, the French would acknowledge it. With regard to the English, he said, that so far from being the stupidest, they were infinitely the cleverest race on the face of the globe ; that they had a small army recruited entirely by volunteers, but that with that army and with their tremendous navy they had annexed one-eighth of the human race ; that the native army in India had recently risen against them, and that they had broken the back of the mutiny before one single company of reinforcement had arrived ; that the United States, an offshoot of England, was the most powerful state in the globe ; and that the English language—the language of the greatest poet which the world ever saw or would see—would soon be talked by 200,000,000 of people ; that England was going to meddle no more in continental affairs, either with money or men, unless the road to India was threatened. In short, my father had a very far higher opinion of you English

than you have of yourselves. Our Chauvinism is bad enough ; you see what it brought us to, and to what it is bringing us. But self-depreciation is still more dangerous than Chauvinism ; it is an error on the other side. "M. Victor Hugo and M. Gambetta talk always of raising the country like one man," my father would say : "that is all nonsense. If the men are undrilled, or, still worse, unofficered, they are no more use in modern warfare than so many old women. The bravest will go to the front, and so you kill all your very best sires. We shall have a visit from these Germans some day, Marie" (that was my mother's name), "and you are a perfect fool ; and you will give me a kiss, my darling, and we will go into the vineyard, for the Germans have not come. The revenge for Jena has not come yet."

You may depend upon it that the *revanche de Jena* was very little out of my mind, and that I hated the Prussians pretty heavily, and did not care much for the English. Well, these matters are altered with me now. I daresay that you cannot understand why. You never had a bullet lying against your femoral artery, driving you mad with agony. You never had Dr. Fuch's strong arm over your chest, holding you down in your bed, while Dr. Morton of London operated, at a time when one single error of the knife would have produced instant death, and when your own sweetheart, who had taken vows for a year, was holding the basin. No, you happy English know none of these things, but we do. *N'importe*. I know both Germans and English better now.

But at this time, do you see, I did not know much about the Germans, because I had only taken my mother's report of them ; so when I came on Cartier, lying by a fire in one of the forest meadows, I was scared, and told him what I had seen. He took it very coolly, and held up before me a wooden cross—a thing which I thought he must have taken from some grave.

"Do you know," he said, "what that is ?"

I said that I thought it was a cross from a grave.

"It is the cross from many graves," he answered. "The Prussians are surveying the country, and this is a cross set up by their engineers on the top of yonder hill."

Then I said that we ought to make for Metz, and tell the commandant.

"We must see more before we talk," he answered. "Let us come on to the Carbonari."

"Had not you better take my watch from me," I whispered.

"No, they will be perfectly honest with us," he answered.

It was dark night now, and we followed the glen down to one

of the upper tributaries of the Moselle. The glen narrowed rather rapidly, and we had a dangerous place to pass. I was following Cartier very closely, when he told me to be very careful how I set my feet. I saw that it was necessary: the stream was on our right, and a high cliff was on our left; the path, if such it could be called, between the cliff and the stream was very narrow and slippery. I had my English fishing-basket on my left side and my rod in my right hand. Cartier forgot about my fishing-basket, and passed on after his caution to me round the corner of the rock. I followed, forgetting my fishing-basket; when I came to the corner by which Cartier had passed, the fishing-basket struck against the rock and upset me headlong into the stream.

I cried out, and Cartier was in after me in a moment. I had only dipped my head, and had held my rod and my basket tight; but I was wet through. Cartier had only gone in up to his middle, and had saved the guns and the ammunition with which he was loaded, without one drop of water being on them.

When Cartier got me out on the grass, I first inquired about my fish, and we found that they were all right. Then I looked round, deadly cold as I was, and saw that we were among a crowd of persons, and, moreover, among a number of curious dull lights, the like of which I had never seen before.

The glen towered high all around us, and the moon was just rising above a tall wooded crag; but I cared nothing for the glen and nothing for the moon; these slow smouldering fires attracted all my attention. I said to Cartier, "What are they?"

"They are the Carbonari."

"Not the people, the fires?"

"They are the fires of the Carbonari," said Cartier. "The Carbonari are a secret people, and do their business in the great forest lands which divide nations. You are among them now."

I saw it. I had read of the Chouans and the Carbonari of Italy, and I had sense to see, in spite of my bitter chill.

To see what? That is easy to tell in our French way. In the two German officers I had seen heartless organisation; among the Carbonari I saw heart, but no organisation. Well, you English laugh at us French because we are epigrammatical; laugh on—any one can laugh at us now.

These people who crowded round me were not respectable; they were far other than respectable, but they were very kind. I was shivering from head to foot, and a woman came up and felt my pulse.

"M. Cartier," she said, "this boy has ague. He should

have a warm bath, but you can get none within ten miles. The boy will be ill if he is not kept warm."

"I allow it, Mother Hortense," said Cartier; "he must sleep with me. We have blankets here, and I can warm him with my body."

"He must go to his bed at once, Cartier, and you are wanted; we have much to speak of. Our young men have seen the German officers. Put the boy in the straw with my boy, and he can have his supper there. You have blankets for two?"

Cartier had both the blankets, and the thing was easily arranged. I was to sleep with Hortense's son, my trout were to be cooked, and were to be brought to me in bed. A little difficulty arose: Mark, Hortense's son, was away, having followed the German officers through the forest, for what purpose it is difficult to conceive, for the two nations were in profound peace, and the German officers had as perfectly good a right to be here as they had to be in Paris. Mark thought, as he told me, that he would like to see what they were about, and, for my part, I did not wonder at it. I was taken into a hut, and put to bed by Cartier. Soon after that I had my supper, with some wine; after which I got warm again, and fell asleep.

I was awakened by some one getting into bed with me. I asked, "Who is that?"

"Mark," said a voice I shall never forget in this world. "Cartier and Mère Hortense said that I was to get into bed with you, and keep you warm. Raise your body, boy, so that I may get my arm round your back. You have had one of our chills."

I did as he told me, and I fell asleep with my face against his, and with his feet twined in mine. O, my brother! O, my brother! by those white feet turned up to the sky, I ask you if we are never to meet again.

CHAPTER VII.

I AWOKE late in the morning, and looked around me as you see a fox look. My bed-fellow was gone, and Hortense and old Mathilde were sitting on the ground looking at me. I turned without opening my eyes, and looked at them. They were strangely alike. I lay and listened, though I was still in pain.

"Sister," said old Mathilde Cartier, "is the little dog awake?"

"No, sister," said Hortense; "he is asleep."

"If he was asleep for ever it would be better. Is he very ill?"

"He caught the chill last night; but my boy has lain with him and warmed him, so think that he is better."

"You are a fool!" said Mathilde.

"Why?" said Hortense.

"Because, if you had the feelings of a mother, you would let me smother him quietly," said Mathilde.

I decided in my own mind that this event should most certainly never occur, and it never did occur. Hortense spoke again.

"You are a very wicked woman, Mathilde," said Hortense; "you are a better hater than I am. I have more reason to hate than you have."

"Yes, because I have more spirit. You wanted spirit to kill him; could you not kill even his son? You have let your son sleep with his, and have brought back the warmth to his body—to a body which I would have sent floating down the river."

"Sister," said Hortense, "I have had revenge enough. If I have taken one child, I need not kill another; and I love both his children."

"You love his children!" cried Mathilde, furiously. "Did he not pay you attention? Did he not walk with you publicly at Metz when the Emperor came? Was it not understood that he was to marry you? Would it not have made a difference in our fortunes? Did he not cast you over? Should we be as we are now had it not been for his shameful usage of you?"

"That is all true, but I loved him," Hortense said. "You do not know the truth. I could not have him, and so I stole his child."

"I would smother this young wretch if I was in your place," said Mathilde, "and let your own flesh and blood have its own."

"You do not know the truth, sister," said Hortense.

"Mark is your own son," said Mathilde.

"He is the boy of my own bosom," said Hortense, "but not my son."

"If he was the son of my own bosom I would see him righted," said Mathilde, "and I would smother this young cub in doing it."

I sat up on my mattress, and said quietly,

"I don't see what you would gain by that, Mère Mathilde. Your intellects seem confused."

At this moment a fearful fit of trembling, racking every bone, came upon me, and I sank back on the mattress; the ague and

fever were sharply upon me, and I was out of my mind to some extent.

CHAPTER VIII.

I was confused in my mind and in great pain for about a day and a half; then I had a long sleep, and woke up quite refreshed, and found that I was as well as ever I was in my life. These slight attacks of ague, which we have in our woods, are really nothing. I have seen a strong man on the march fall out, and have it over under the hedge, and catch up his company before the day is over, not a bit the worse. I have left the dinner-table with one of them, and come back again perfectly well before dinner was over. This first one was rather severe, and it is quite possible that I may have been a little alarmed and *tête montée*. On the second morning I got up, dressed myself, and began looking to my sporting gear. I was busy at this when Mère Hortense came into the hut.

"Mère Hortense," I said, "where is Mère Mathilde?"

"I believe," she said, carelessly, "that she is at Thionville by now."

"At Thionville! that is quite impossible."

"Cartier told me that he had seen her at Fond de Givonne or Givonne—I forget which—and was on her way to Thionville."

"Why," I said, "she was here last night."

"It is strange that I should not have seen her then," said Hortense, kneeling before the fire, and blowing it up with her mouth.

"Why, she was talking to you, and I lay and listened. I heard every word you two said."

"You have been out of your head, sweetheart. Our people are often delirious with ague. You were dreaming; you will be as well as ever now, and you must travel to-day."

She looked me so straight in the face as she said this, that I could hardly doubt her, and went on preparing for my journey. I determined, however, to ask Cartier, and in a very short time he came in and gave me "Good morning."

"Cartier," I said, "you would not deceive me?"

"No, my darling. Why should I?"

"Then, was Mère Mathilde here last night?"

"Certainly not," he answered, emphatically.

And I doubted no more. I do not think that he would have deceived me. If I had asked had she been there the *night before last*, I should have got the truth from him. As it was, I came to the conclusion that I had been delirious; and yet the dream of Mère Mathilde seemed so wonderfully life-like, that I could not make it out one way or another.

We had a hurried breakfast, and then we went out in the bright morning, while the dew was on the grass, and while the wooded glens were still bathed in shadow. Our mornings in Lorraine are so bright and pure, that they make old men young. I once was lying out after roe with an Englishman, and he said to me, "Your mornings here are like those in Australia; the air is like the wine of Champagne." On such a morning Cartier and I started out into the Ardennes forest, with every vein in our bodies tingling with health and excitement.

The Carbonari were all gone—at least, only a few children, half naked, were playing among the wild-flowers in front of the huts. It occurred to me—I cannot say why—to ask the name of this place as we walked on.

Cartier asked why I wished to know.

"I might wish to come again when you were not with me."

"Well then," he said, "it is the 'Bois des pas Perdus'; that is the only name which it has, and it is only known to the initiated."

"Cartier," I said suddenly, "did I ever have a brother?"

I asked it so suddenly, that he was taken by surprise, evidently.

He said, without a pause, "Yes."

"Did he die?"

"Yes. He was killed by wolves at Petange, in Luxemburg, in snow time, ten years ago."

"Why was he there?"

"He was there with your father, who was going to Esche on an iron speculation, and then on to his estates in the Rhine provinces. And there was a terrible affray with wolves above Petange: your father was saved by some peasants who followed his carriage, but your brother was killed."

"Did they get my poor brother's body?"

"About as much of it as they would get of yours, if you were among the wolves in the snow, after they have packed—that is to say, nothing at all. There is a tomb to him in Petange churchyard. Now you know all about it, and you must ask me no more. If ever your father knows that I have told you so much, he will never let me see you again."

We walked on in silence for above a mile through the open

forest, when Cartier told me not to speak, a thing which was perfectly unnecessary, for I was thinking of my poor brother; how dearly I had longed to have a brother; how I would have loved him; why my father had never told me of this hideous accident; and of how my mother went yearly to Petange; and how I had pleaded to go with her, and had always been refused. I say there was no need to bid me be silent, but Cartier's command to silence made me look up. We were in one of those dense bands of copse-wood which are the rule and not the exception in the Ardennes, and before us the path topped a little elevation, very narrow, walled by oak copse, and covered with bright greensward, with one small rock on the right hand side. Cartier took me into the copsewood, and we lay down together in the high fern, on a carpet of lilies of the valley, some of which had thus early their reddening berries on them.

"We must be here for some time," he said; "we had better have our *déjeuner à la fourchette* here."

So we had chicken, wine, and bread, and we had finished quite a long time, when I heard behind us a low howl, "Loup, loup, loup-garou!"

"A wolf," I said.

"Not the real animal: it is our boy driving the roe-deer for us. Load your carbine and watch by the rock; we shall have a shot directly. This is better than I thought; hurrah! the real wolves are up the wind. What a boy that is!"

As he spoke, the wolf-cry was answered from before us, up the wind, apparently quite near.

"That," said Cartier, "is a *real* wolf," and he answered him with one of the most perfect imitations I ever heard; then we lay still again, and Cartier whistled twice; the wolf call was repeated behind us. You talk of your English woodcraft, it is nothing to ours. At the second call, a splendid buck was standing before me on the top of the rise, within twenty yards, tapping the ground impatiently with his right fore-foot.

"Be steady," said Cartier, and the caution was very necessary, for my hand was shaking. I fired just behind the shoulder; the pretty beast stood stock-still for a moment, then he quietly doubled his knees, and fell down motionless, quite dead. I had shot him through the heart.

In my wild triumph I was rising to my feet, to look at my prey, when Cartier pulled me down, and put his hand over my mouth.

"Be quiet," he hissed in my ear; "be perfectly quiet, our boy is calling the wolves to the blood; lie here, and load your carbine."

I obeyed, intensely interested ; and as we waited nearly an hour, I may take this opportunity of telling you that this was the first wild animal I had ever killed. I used to give my father immense anxiety by going out all night with a carbine, and coming home with a wolf's skin ; but, in fact, I had never seen one. I used to buy them from the Gardes Champêtres, and the young men. I had a fancy for possessing wolf-skins, and I used to buy them from those who could shoot them, somewhere late at night ; this gave my father and Dr. Tullier the idea I had killed them, and my father had not the heart to inquire into the real truth ; when I found that he thought so, my boyish vanity prevented me from undeceiving him. So the theory grew in my mother's mind—a fact which I did not know until long after—that I was destined to revenge my brother's death on the wolves. In the end of all things—in the general ruin, when the confessional was forgotten—Father Servi told me that my mother had consulted him on this point, and that he, not knowing what to say, had said nothing at all.

But Cartier and I lay there a long time in silence, and all this time the artificial wolf behind us kept answering the real wolf before us ; the real wolf getting more and more to our left. “ If he catches the scent of the blood first,” said Cartier, “ we shall have him ; if he catches a whiff of us, we shall lose him. He will call no more now ; I hope he has not got down the wind of us.” And, indeed, *our* wolf behind us had left off calling, but I thought that I could hear a rustle approaching us in the rear.

Cartier touched my arm, and I was still as a stone ; for before us in the path, coming silently up, was a magnificent dog-wolf working steadily up to the dead buck. He was the largest wolf I ever saw ; he stood as high as the table at which I write these words.

I wondered why Cartier dared whisper now in this awful stillness, when I hardly dared move to get my carbine ready, but he told me in my ear, “ He has his nose to the blood now, and cannot see us or hear us. It is old Motier of Audun la Romain, who disappeared two years ago. I knew he was a wehrwolf, and he made away with his own nephew about that two thousand francs ; wait till he is opposite you, and fire just behind the shoulder-blade.”

The wolf came on steadily towards the blood which was trickling among the roots of the daisies among the grass ; when he was opposite to me I fired, as I thought truly, and he gave a leap in the air and lay motionless. At the same moment a shriek rang on my ears, and a figure dashed past me ; before there was the

least time for thought, I saw the wolf and a bare-legged boy rolling over and over on the grass in a death struggle. The wolf had his teeth fixed apparently in the boy's throat, and the boy was making fierce, wild stabs at him with a short knife. I saw that the wolf had been pretending death, and I saw that the boy was Mark. Cartier was on his legs with the fowling-piece at his shoulder, but, of course, afraid to fire. I caught sight of his *couteau de chasse*, and seizing it from his sheath, I dashed at the wolf, which had now thrown Mark over the body of the dead buck, and was apparently killing him, though I could see the firm brown hand which held the knife bringing blood at every thrust into the thick brown hair.

I seized the beast by the tail, and gave one stab on the ribs—a slight one. The wolf turned on me, and I met his eyes for one instant only; then they seemed to fall away from mine, and he lay down and died in good earnest.

Now, what account do you think that my dear foolish old Cartier gave of this affair? That the wolf had got Mark by the throat, and had nearly killed him. (The wolf had Mark by the *shirt*, and Mark was only *scratched* by his paws, and not *bitten* in one single place.) That I had missed my shot (the bullet injured the spinal vertebrae), and that the wolf was uninjured; that I had run in with his *couteau de chasse*, and had slightly wounded the wolf, scarcely drawing blood; but at the instant the wolf set his eyes on mine he had died. Such was Cartier's account. Mine is, that on flaying the wolf I found his back seriously injured, with ten stabs from Mark's knife, one of which must, I think, have penetrated the heart; and my opinion is, that if Mark and the wolf had been left to fight it out together, Mark would have been little the worse. However, give a dog a bad name, and hang him. I was to be a wehrwolf, and so I must be.

CHAPTER IX.

WE all three stood looking at the wolf and the roe-buck, and then Mark burst out laughing.

"I led the old wretch on well, did I not?" he said; "I have known of him this two years. By-the-bye, little master, I owe my life to you."

"Nonsense!" I said.

"Ah, it is always nonsense with heroes like you. You risked your life to save mine, and I will remember. Let us cut up our game, Monsieur will like the wolf-skin. Aha! my old man" (kicking the wolf's head), "I deceived you finely."

"It is Old Motier of Audun la Romain," said Cartier; "he murdered his nephew for two thousand francs, but do not kick him."

"Old Motier," said Mark; "why, he was drowned in the Alssette, at Audun la Tige, smuggling."

"You think so, you young fool," said Cartier, "but I tell you that he was *loup-garou*, and there he lies."

"It is all equal if it pleases M. Cartier," said Mark, with his eyes very wide open; "but we will skin these beasts. I will take the wolf-skin to our people. M. Cartier, you are a good forester, will you do it?"

To ask Cartier to do a thing and to have it done were one and the same thing. He agreed at once, and Mark said,

"Come you with me, and I will show you where to catch trout in your English manner. M. Cartier, I shall not come back. Some of our people are close here, and will be glad of such venison as you do not want; I will send them. Good-bye!" And so he and I walked off together, I taking the fishing-rod and basket. We soon came to a small stream and sat down together, and Mark put his arm round my neck, saying suddenly,

"Why do I feel differently towards you than towards any one I ever met?"

"I cannot tell, Mark; I feel in the very same way towards you."

"Little Monsieur, do you know where you are going?"

"No."

"You are going to Germany, to learn German proclivities. I know your father is no Frenchman."

"He is German born," I replied.

"Well, I will say no more; but do not be corrupted. Remain a Frenchman. Will you kiss me?"

"Yes."

And so my brother was gone. What passed before I ever knew he was my brother, time must tell. But nature seldom deceives one.

I must still carry you on my first great journey, because after this I made no journey at all for nearly two years, except from Metz to Sedan, and back again. The time of my captivity was rapidly approaching, although I was unconscious of it. I was soon to be bound hand and foot at Metz, but I did not know it. I only know

that I hate Metz to this day, and hope that the Germans may like it better than I did ; as I write I laugh, I cannot at all help it. They have made Metz a *German* town ; what would you English say if the Irish made London an Irish town ? It would be quite as ridiculous. Here I am in my French way talking of Metz before the proper time. We always live now in the past or in the future, we French. We have no present ; at least we will not accept it. *Enfin*.

"Where now !" I said to Cartier on the next morning ; "are we to lie in the woods another night ?"

"Yes, and many," he said. "But I ask you one thing ; dare you lie in the wood by yourself ?"

I answered roundly, "Yes."

"You must do so then to-night for many hours."

"Why ?"

"I fear to trust you, my darling, in the work which I have on hand."

"But, Jacques, you can trust me."

"My boy, it is out of the question. You cannot personate. I have to personate. You might be known ; you might commit some small indiscretion which would ruin everything. Be content, I will tell you all afterwards. As you love France, trust me."

"I will trust you, Jacques, but tell me more."

"We must walk very fast," said Cartier ; "and your father's fortune partly depends on your discretion."

"I will walk fast and hold my tongue," I answered.

"Well, then, we shall cross the Luxemburg frontier in three hours."

"The Luxemburg frontier ?" I exclaimed, aghast.

"Yes, you do not know how far and how fast we have been walking. Do you see those two hills ?"

"Yes."

"One is Stomberg, the other Johansberg ; both are in Dutch territory."

"But the Dutch live in Holland."

"Both those mountains are in Holland, however. English diplomacy will make Paris the capital of Denmark some day. They have the money, these English, and they used to move the states of Europe as one moves chessmen. They guarantee this, and they guarantee that, because they have the power of putting an end to foreign commerce ; but now we know that they dare not do it, because they would put an end to their own. My dear, we shall be in the dominions of the King of Holland in three hours."

"And what shall we do there?"

"I shall tell you when it is done. I shall go into Luxemburg, and return into France alone, representing myself as a Luxemburger. I shall thereby gain intelligence, most likely, so as to guide your father in his commercial speculations. It will probably be necessary for me to be arrested. In that case you must leave all our traps in the woods above the town, and make across the country to the Baths of Mondorf, where you will wait for me. I will tell you farther when we part. Mind what I say; *your father wants information, and I must get it for him.* In case of a *débâcle* your father might be half ruined, and he does not want to be half ruined. Now, come along, we must walk till the moon rises."

There was no sporting that day, for the walking was all over high and uninteresting cultivated downs, always bending to the right of the wooded hill which the Dutchmen call a mountain, but which every one else would call a hill—Mont. St. Jean. "A fine country for cavalry and artillery, master!" said Cartier to me once. "Those cursed English know how to defend their country better than we do." But towards evening we saw forests in the distance, and he was no better pleased. "These forests will help to ruin us," he said. In fact, he was in a bad humour, an odd thing for him. We came, late in the day, on an old peasant, who was ploughing his ground for clover; a little tiny strip of ground it was, with not a vestige of hedge between it and the nearest forest, three miles off. This peasant was very old and without any *spécialité*, unless one might say that a pocket-handkerchief would have been an addition to his toilette. Jacques Cartier arrested his ploughing, and asked him for the shadow of his plough while we had supper, to which he invited him. The old peasant of Lorraine was most pleased to sup with us, and we sat down under the shadow of his two horses, which, as he remarked, gave more shadow than the plough would do; "for," he continued, "it was without doubt that both the elder and the younger monsieur had remarked that the larger the object was, the larger was the shadow which it cast." After hearing this magnificent French platitude, I felt sure that we were not yet over the border, even into Luxemburg. I was sure that I was still among the countrymen of Victor Hugo, and that Lorraine would remain French as long as the world went round.

As we sat under the shadow of the two horses (whose convenience was not, after the French manner, for a moment consulted), we ate sausage and bread, and drank wine. Cartier remarked to the old peasant,

"Badinguet keeps his frontier pretty open here, father."

"And who is Badinguet?" said the old man, chewing.

"The Emperor."

"Ah! the Emperor at Paris. Yes, I have heard of him. His wife is a good and pious woman, and I notice, Monsieur, that the wife has much influence over the husband; for me, I should never go to mass unless my wife took me."

"Would you go to a bull-fight with your wife?" shouted Cartier.

"If she made it a point," said the old peasant. "You see, it is necessary that women should be amiable for one's peace of mind, and if contradicted women are unamiable."

"Would you vote as your wife told you?" asked Cartier.

"Undoubtedly. I should make a point of doing so. Had Monsieur the experience of women which I have, he would do the same."

Cartier arose soon afterwards, and strode on towards the forest, about three miles distant. I regret to say that his language during the next three miles was morally indefensible, and politically was sufficient to send a dozen such men to Cayenne. When we got into the forest he got cooler.

We pushed through more than a mile of the densest copsewood without a path before we stopped; at last I stumbled over a rock, and found that we were on rising ground. The place was such that I should fancy a murdered corpse might lie there without discovery during seven years, and only be found when the wood was cut at the end of that time. Here we were very busy; we hid everything away under piles of fern in different places, and then he made me a bed of boughs, fern, and blankets. After that we had supper, and then he rose to go with his pipe in his mouth, and he told me to follow him.

In less than a quarter of a mile we came on a potato-field, and he showed me a small village in the hollow below. "That," he said, "is Petange, in Luxemburg territory. If I don't come back to-morrow morning, go down there, and ask for Père Goton, at the Couronne d'Or; tell him that you are nephew of M. Schelcht, at the baths of Mondorf, and he will put your feet in the right way. Take this letter at the same time, and deliver it to Mademoiselle Louise, at Mondorf, and wait for me."

I promised to obey. In fact, I liked all this mystery; and as we went back into the wood again, I felt like one of your English Arthur's knights, with the delightful feeling on me that I did not know what was going to happen next. Cartier took me back to our lair in the wood, made me promise to lie down, and not sing

or whistle ; and then told me he was going down into the town as soon as it was dark.

"To what town ?" I asked.

"To Longwy ; we are but a mile and a half from it."

I lay down at once among the comfortable blankets and fern, and covered myself over. Cartier smoked for above an hour, until it was dark enough in spite of the moon. Then he came to me, and looked at my heavily-closed eyes, and listened to my heavy breathing ; then he kissed me, and went away, pushing the branches of the copsewood, which glistened in the moonlight.

Then, like a fox out of his lair, I rose swiftly and silently, and followed him.

CHAPTER X.

THERE was danger, or he would have let me share his adventure. There was danger, and I would share it with him, whether he would or no. I was not going to see the man I loved best in the world going into danger alone ; but what danger was it ? What danger could there be in our own Longwy, "the iron gate of France" ?

As I followed him I made no noise. I was determined that he should not know of my following until it was too late to send me back. I thought that I had lost him once, for the boscage was so thick ; but immediately after I crashed down over a rocky bank and lay in a rutted lane, rather bruised ; but I lay quite still, for he was in the lane in the moonlight before me. He thought it was a wolf, and I let him turn the corner before I got up.

I had to be very careful, for the moon was now bright. When I came to the corner of the lane where he had disappeared, I saw a town with high chimney-stalks below me, which was lower Longwy : above were long straight lines on the top of a hill, which, from my experience of Sedan, I knew to be fortresses. Keeping in the shadow of the garden and vineyard walls I followed Cartier closely and yet more closely towards the town.

Suddenly there came a bright flash of light from overhead, which I thought was lightning. I heard a "roar," or I should rather use an English word, "bang." It was the evening gun, and the drums and horns began their magnificent music in the citadel. I saw Cartier begin to run ; the town was about to be closed. I ran also, but not quite fast enough to prevent my being entangled in a crowd.

Half a dozen pairs of red breeches were before me, with their accompanying white gaiters flashing in the moonlight, before I was aware that I was among the belated soldiers rushing in to drum call. I was beginning to laugh when I was seized about the waist by a strong arm, and looking round I saw that I was being carried along by a large chasseur, whose accent, if not his appearance, would have brought him to the guillotine were it a capital crime to be a Gascon.

"Run, my pretty little rascal!" he cried; "has Heaven given thee legs for nothing? Run, then. Thou art of the Lycée, then?"

I said "Yes," with what breath I had left, not taking care to say that I was of the Lycée of Sedan, and that I was out as a spy on that spy Jacques Cartier, who was looking after things so as to be able to advise my father as to selling out all his property in France. I now suspected this strongly; but this was not the place to speak about it. As we all, some forty of us, rushed at the gate, it was just being closed. I was bruised in spite of the care of my chasseur, but not badly. In the end I was inside the gate. Was Cartier in also?

Yes, he had come in on the end of the mob, and I saw him slinking away under a gas lamp. The soldiers soon separated, and having been kissed by the Gascon I was allowed to go.

I followed Cartier. Now for the first time I *knew* that I had been set to watch him. That my father to some extent distrusted him, but knew that I would tell him everything. Ah, father, you might have trusted Cartier as well as I did; indeed you might. He was more intensely French in sentiment than you were; but he was as true to you as to France. What was his worst crime? That of telling you that it was time for poor old France to prepare for the worst, and so save your money.

I followed Cartier. He went to the Café Cheval Blanc, and I peeped in after him. The place was filled with officers; but Cartier sat alone with his back to the door, which enabled me to slip in without his perceiving me. The waiter came to me, and I had lemonade and cake put behind the back of our unconscious Cartier, who said nothing, but who listened to everything.

I cannot repeat the conversation of the officers. It was not good; it seemed to me that their heart was not in their work; and there was a bragging self-sufficiency about them which seemed to me quite different from all I had heard of the armies of the great Frederick or the great Napoleon, and more particularly different from that wondrous little army of you English, which has the most extraordinary *spécialité* of only being beaten on an

average three times in fifty years, and of always winning in the long-run, as results show. I say that I was not at all pleased with our officers, until a tall general officer in a scarlet cloak came in. I liked him.

"Sit down, gentlemen," he said, as they rose. "Can any of you give me the route to Sierck?"

Not one it seemed.

"D'Estrange, you were born here—surely you must know?" said the general.

"Upon my honour, General de Failly, I do not," said D'Estrange.

"Is Captain Rossel here?" asked General de Failly.

"Yes, he is quartered here, and is in the next room; but he is in bed."

"Call him," said General de Failly.

D'Estrange did so, and in a few moments I saw a sight which I shall never forget, and heard words which are burnt into my heart as by fire. An inner door opened, and a young man came out holding a candle in front of his face. The young officer had nothing on but a white shirt and a pair of scarlet trousers, which he had tied tightly round his waist by his belt. His head was splendidly shaped, and he had enough of French dexterity to hold the candle so high over his head as to cast the shadows downwards. The immobility of his face would have done credit to an English midshipman, while being scolded by his captain on the deck of a frigate. I never saw him before or after, yet this figure in the scarlet trousers and the white shirt comes into my mind's eye whenever I hear his name.

"Captain Rossel," said General de Failly, "can you give me the route to Sierck?"

"Cross the Luxemburg frontier, and hold straight for it, leaving Mont St. Jean on your right, and when you make the Stomberg, you will see it at your feet on the other side of the Moselle."

"But I mean through French territory," said General de Failly.

"Oh, miles round. This scoundrelly neutrality of Luxemburg prevents us getting from one part of France to the other."

"We propose to buy it."

"But Prussia will not let you."

"Well, I will not argue. I want to get to Sierck without going out of France."

"You must go round," said Rossel. "Are we going to—you know, General—to respect the neutrality of Luxemburg in the next war?"

"Of course," said the General.

"Then let us hope the Prussians will do the same," said Rossel. "I think, General, that you will find a German spy in the room now," and Rossel pointed to Cartier.

CHAPTER XI.

CARTIER stood up at once, confronting Captain Rossel and General de Faily.

"I conceive, General," he said, "that Captain Rossel is in error. I am no Prussian spy, but a good Frenchman."

Rossel's brows lowered. "Where were you last night?" he asked.

"In the forest," said Cartier, coolly.

"And what were you doing there?" asked Rossel.

"Serving the people."

"That is an answer entirely without sense," said Rossel.

"Not entirely, Captain. You have served the people before now. In the Rue Picpus, for example."

"Do you make an accusation against me, then?" said Rossel.

"Not I," said Cartier; "but your conscience does so."

"This is a bold dog," said Rossel. "Ask him, General, to precise his accusation against me."

"Precise the accusation," said General de Faily.

"I have made none," said Cartier. "The cit—I should say the Captain Rossel knows what I mean. We both love the people, we would die for the people; but he has denounced me as a Prussian spy. I demand that he retracts those words. I demand it."

"And how can you disprove it?" said Rossel. "Where are your passports?"

"I have none," said Cartier, advancing towards General de Faily and Rossel. "Hear me in private."

As he went up to these two men I noticed that another man had risen from his seat, and was standing behind General de Faily and Rossel. I did not see him clearly, but I thought that he was a handsome Jew, very eager and rather pale. I saw this man behind De Faily and Rossel. I sneaked up from table to table, until I was close behind them, Cartier never having seen me; and I heard this conversation.

"I am a Prussian spy," said Cartier, "and I hold my life in my hands. But I am a spy on the side of France. My wife is a pedlar, and she goes to and fro. I am nothing, I equally go to and fro. We French are in horrible danger."

"He speaks well, this one," said Rossel.

"No one will believe, no one will give credit to our danger. When I go to look on the danger, then I am called a Prussian spy by a friend of the people like Captain Rossel."

"I retract the words, then," said Rossel.

"I think that you are right," said De Faily.

Rossel and General de Faily were standing in almost absolute darkness, with Cartier before them, and the mysterious man behind. Suddenly I saw two white hands part Rossel and De Faily by the shoulders, and I heard a voice which said—

"Your name, then?"

"Jacques Cartier."

"A good name, but Breton."

"It is not a sin to be Breton, Monsieur."

"It is little short," said the gentleman behind De Faily and Rossel. "Are you true to the service of France?"

"Most true, Monsieur."

"To the death?"

"To the death, Monsieur."

"You suppose that a great disaster is hanging over France?"

"I know it, Monsieur."

"Suppose, now, that every conceivable evil was to happen to France," said the invisible gentleman. "Suppose that in consequence of our present rotten government——"

"My dear sir," said the General.

"Suppose," continued this gentleman, "that Paris was taken and France ruined; what would you do then?"

"Die or be revenged," said Jacques Cartier.

"This is an estimable citizen," said Gambetta. "I would have him arrested for form's sake to-night, and then let him go free."

Cartier was therefore arrested and walked off, without observing me at all. When he was gone, I went to De Faily, Rossel, and Gambetta, and I addressed them.

"And who are you?" said Rossel, smiling.

"A Frenchman," I answered.

"To the death?" said Rossel.

"To the death."

"What do you wish for, my little sir?" said De Faily.

"I wish a pass out of the town, and I wish the freedom of Jacques Cartier."

"Are you Republican?" asked Gambetta.

"No," I answered, "I am Orleanist; but before all I am French."

"Will you not go to bed, my brave boy?" said Gambetta.

"Yes, to my lair in the wood," I answered. "Let me out of the town; I have work on hand for France."

"What have you to do for France?" said General de Failly.

"Sir," I answered, "nothing, except to tell grown men the truth. Seize Belgian and Dutch Luxemburg, and save France."

"This is a strange boy," said de Failly. "Where do you come from, boy?"

"Sedan."

CHAPTER XII.

THIS chapter is rather a short one. Gambetta, Rossel, and De Failly took me outside and handed me over to the guard, with particular instructions to see me through the gate, and with promises that Cartier should be released early the next morning. My last words in Longwy were with Gambetta at the gate.

"My boy," he said, "will you have a soldier to see you on the way?"

"No, sir," I said; "I know my way well, but please let Cartier out to-morrow."

"I will ask De Failly to bully the mayor for you," said Gambetta, "you poor little innocent; we are dragooned to death in this old France of ours. And so you are not a Republican!"

"No, sir," I said promptly; "we are not fit for it."

"Perhaps not," said Gambetta, thoughtfully. "But we do not know; had Washington spoken as you have spoken, where would the United States have been now?"

The drawbridge was lowered for me, and I sped away under the twinkling stars towards my lair in the woodlands above Petange. Yet I was scarcely across the drawbridge when I halted and looked back, to see the last of Gambetta. He stood under the light by the guard-house, with his hand to his head, thinking; then he turned and walked slowly back under the arch, and was lost to my sight.

Let us think for a little, young English gentlemen. I am a Monarchist, and for that matter an Orleanist, yet I consider that Gambetta is one of the greatest and noblest of men which France has ever produced. Our people, our own French, have taken it into their heads to laugh at him. I hate his politics, and think him politically a fool, but what does that matter? Look at the man and what he has done. He rallied all France, until our conquerors began to respect our raw levies; he roused all France; it was too late, but was that *his* fault? He was ignorant of war, yet his rabble checked the unconquerable Germans before Orleans; only certainly to be thrown back afterwards. I confess that we were utterly ruined: no Frenchman would deny that. I confess also that we might have had better terms had it not been for Gambetta; but I wish you to put yourselves in our place for a minute.

Suppose that your fleet was ruined; suppose that three hundred thousand men were in Surrey; suppose that London was locked up from the outer world, and was given up to starvation, banded round by an impregnable army. Suppose, then, also that your Queen had fled to America, and that you had no government with which a foreign nation could treat. Suppose, in fact, that London was in the state of Paris the winter before last. What could you do? I am unable to say. We sent a young lawyer out in a balloon to raise the provinces. It was entirely useless; you cannot make trained soldiers in a day; but Gambetta did his best; no man, in fact, ever did better; he got together three hundred thousand men (not soldiers), and made them fight after the fashion of civilians. His armies were overpowered; he was ignorant of modern war, he stuck to the traditions of the early revolutionary wars; he imagined that a nation could be raised to face modern arms. Gambetta has seen his folly by now, but his name should be a great one in France as long as France lasts.

What, we are dead, are we? Yes, indeed! Quite so! For my part I do not think that we are quite dead as yet. I am not dead yet, in spite of that sausage which Mère Hortense gave me at Longyon. I think that you will hear of old France again. *Sept douleurs!* It maddens me to hear France spoken of as dead, and Gambetta sneered at by fools, who never did anything in their lives except cackle and lie.

CHAPTER XIII.

You might as well ask a roebuck to observe the Ardennes frontier as Cartier. I wonder very much how our pedlars manage with regard to passports; I strongly suspect that they can manage entirely without them. Knowing this, I was perfectly certain that the moment he was released he would follow me at once, and that there would be but little trouble. I went to our lair in the woods, and took my carbine and a game-bag, which I filled with necessary things, and then I went down into Petange.

I had no difficulty there, for I said simply who I was and that I was wandering, desiring to get to Mondorf. The landlord was more than kind, he was deeply interested in me. How was my mother, and how was my father? Would I like to see my brother's grave while Madame got breakfast? I thought that I would like to see my poor brother's grave very much indeed; and so we started out, and very soon stood against a tiny stone cross in the churchyard.

"Here he lies, then?" I asked inquiringly.

"No, Monsieur, not a vestige of your brother's body, or a relic of his death, was ever recovered save one."

"And that my mother has," I said carelessly.

"Pardon, Monsieur, my wife has it, and has always kept it concealed from your mother during her many visits."

"What is it?"

"It matters not what it is, Monsieur; I will give it to your father without a word, should he claim it, but we will never give it to your mother."

"I will take it to my father, if you like," I said. And the landlord thought for some little time.

"Will you promise not to show it to your mother?"

"I will."

"Then come with me." He took me back to the inn, and up to his bedroom, where out of an old oak press he took an envelope, which he carefully sewed into my waistcoat, I submitting with perfect quietness, but most fully determined to unsew it and look at it the moment I had an opportunity. Then I had my breakfast, and offered to pay for it, but he would not let me. I got him to show me the road to Mondorf, or rather the direction of Mondorf, and then I started across the hedgeless fields towards Mont St. Jean, skirting the frontier, and feeling rather lonely without Cartier.

I soon saw that I was watched, and by a friend too. I saw a

swift figure lurking wherever it was possible, and beckoning me to go towards, as I made it out, Mont St. Jean. I did so, and no sooner was I in the copsewood, than I heard a laugh behind me, and turning, I saw Mark, bare-footed and bare-headed.

"Here we are, safe and sound; Cartier is free, but we must dodge and skulk till you and he are through Luxemburg; you must not be seen for fifty miles now. How I wish I was going with you!"

I was so glad to see him again; I never loved any one as I did Mark, I think. I asked him what we were to do.

"Skulk here," he said, "for a little while and watch; come higher up the hill, and we can peer through the trees; but we must not get as high as the chapel, or at least, I must not."

"Why not?"

"Because of the Prussians."

"But we are in Luxemburg territory."

"Ay, but the garrison of Luxemburg is Prussian. See, there are four of them in the field measuring; may the evil one take them!"

Mark was as enthusiastically French as Cartier, and a German could do no good; most certainly there were four German officers in the plain below us, but they were not measuring anything, but apparently out for a ride, and coming straight towards us; evidently making for the road which led up to the chapel at the summit of the mountain.

"Mark," I said, "they are making for the top of the hill. I will go up to the chapel myself, they can do nothing to me. Keep my carbine and wait here."

He took it from me and I began climbing. Those who have climbed Mont St. Jean know that the side towards Petange is heavy work, alternate belts of copsewood and *gazons* of slippery turf. I made good weather of it, however, and was at the chapel on the summit before I heard the Germans come toiling on horse-back up the stony ride which led to the summit.

Suddenly a gunshot rang through the wood, and there was a splintering of stones and a plunging of horses, followed by laughter; the four Germans came clinking up the hill out of the wood, and then drew bridle before me. I was lying at the chapel door perfectly *insouciant*; though with my heart beating pretty fast, for I saw before me the two officers whom I had met when I was fishing in the Ardennes.

"You had a narrow escape, von Alvenstein," said one to the other. "These Luxemburgers are no jägers. That shot missed the bird entirely."

"Gott, yes, but it has gone through my coat," said the other officer. "If the wood had not been so thick, I would have hunted the careless fellow down and boxed his ears for him. You say the bird; did you see any bird, then, at which he could have shot?"

"Why, no, friend," said the other officer, "that shot was fired at you."

"A man can only die once," said the other German officer. "These Luxemburgers are French at heart. Let it be, it is not worse than Ireland after all. And we guarantee their neutrality, do we?"

"We must stick to the letter of the law," said the other officer.

"Confound the letter of the law," said the first officer. "What letter of the law warrants England in keeping Gibraltar? and yet an English minister who would let it go ought to be hanged on the highest tower of Windsor, and left to rot there. What right has Luxemburg to exist? Are we to respect this tag on the Dutchman's breeches?"

"We had better be on the right side," said the second officer.

The first officer grunted. "It is better, but suppose your fine man of the 2nd of December (a matter for which I honour him) is not loyal, and violates this dirty little strip of territory; what then? He is not very scrupulous; he has bought up England by a commercial treaty, so he is safe at sea. Suppose, I say, that he was to play us that trick; what should we look like?"

"Fools," said the other German officer. "But the king would never allow it."

"Then the king is a—most Quixotic man," said the second officer. "Are we, when the time comes, to lose 200,000 men because we must march on Sierck instead of on Sedan?"

"It seems so," said the other. "But we hold Luxemburg."

"Well, that is good," said the second officer; "that is a nut to crack, at all events. Ha! ha! Good luck to Luxemburg. Why, here is our little trout-fisher on the steps of the chapel."

I must call the attention of the very youngest readers to these facts. At this time there was a Prussian garrison in the neutral town of Luxemburg, and the Prussian engineer officers were at work to make it stronger than ever, with outlying forts. Luxemburg is the key to France, and most nations would have fought for it as you would for the only place in the world which is stronger, Gibraltar, the key to the road of your Indian empire of 120,000,000 souls. Soon after I heard this conversation between the two German officers at Mont St. Jean, rather strange things happened.

The Emperor of the French, consulting no one, offered to buy this fortress from the King of Holland. I must say that a deadlier insult was seldom offered to another nation than this from France to Prussia. Mutual friends, however, stepped in, and Prussia gave up the fortress without a blow, on condition that it should be dismantled, that is to say, that the Luxemburgers should spend a million of money on a destruction which never could be done, and which never will be done. We ask now, in this midnight of French humiliation, why a kingdom like Prussia should have submitted? The answer is easy. Our prestige was terribly great at that time. We had done well in the Crimea; we had beaten the magnificent army of Austria like an old sack; Europe seemed to hang on our hands, and every one, you English included, was afraid of us. Prussia yielded because she was *afraid*; let them dare to say otherwise. If they were not afraid, why did they cut down the trees on the glacis of Cologne? It is pitiable and horrible to see how we deceived ourselves, but it is almost amusing to see how we deceived the Germans. We knew nothing, our newspapers and our officials always lied, and the end of it was that the Emperor himself was deceived by his creatures, and went to war with 380,000 men against 1,000,000, in hopes that the South German States would join him. The end came, as you know, but not before some very long-headed men, including my father, had learnt something about the temper and resources of Germany, and made themselves safe. Before we gave the old King of Prussia the last cruel insult about the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern for Spain, my father's money was mainly moved into the Rhine provinces, to Amsterdam, and to London. My father's subscription to the last French loan was only 8,000 francs.

But I am here at the chapel of Mont St. Jean, before the two German officers, who spoke to me in German. I did not choose to remember that language to-day, and I wished to see if they remembered that I could speak it at all. They apparently did not, but spoke to me in French.

"Hah! my little Frenchman," said one—the one I have called the second officer. "Come here to me, if you please."

I came to him; he caught me by the back of my coat, and lifted me into the saddle before him.

"Now, my boy," he said, "you will sit there. What is the name of your friend we saw hiding down there in the wood with a gun?"

I was so taken aback that I said, "Mark."

"Ah! well, do you see that if Mark shoots at us again, he is as likely to hit you as any of the other four."

I was only a boy, and could not hold my tongue. "He cannot fire again, for I have all the cartridges," I said in my folly.

"It was Mark who fired at me, then," said the German, laughing.

I turned frankly to him. "I cannot think it possible," I said, "but he is a wild boy out of the woods, and I know nothing of him. You cannot believe, sir, that I connived at such a thing?"

"Little trout-fisher, no," he said; "your face is your passport. Tell him to take better aim next time." And when we came out of the wood he put me down, and the four rode away towards Luxemburg, leaving me standing like a fool in a potato-field.

Mark was beside me as soon as they were out of sight. "You shot at that man," I said, angrily.

"Indeed I did not," said Mark, eagerly. "I was *aiming* at him, and thinking how nice it would be, and the infernal arrangement went off in my hands; I swear that is the truth."

And so I was obliged to accept Mark's explanation, and also to accept the wonderful fact that Jacques Cartier found us, quite accidentally, a quarter of an hour after the German officers had gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Now the route!" I said to Cartier, when we started after our next meal. "Where shall we go next?"

"Nowhere," he said, rising up and preparing to walk. "A long way, but to nowhere to-night."

"We sleep out again, then?"

"We sleep out many times. There will be danger to-night again."

"I love it," I replied.

"Then you will have it. But we must have game; and I think I know where to get it. We'll now cross the railway here. We are going into France again. Dost thou hear?"

I followed him over the railway, and we seemed perfectly unobserved. After pushing through the forest, we came into an open patch of potatoes and buck-wheat, and at his advice we took our shot-guns. We had not walked twenty yards when a pack or covey of hazel grouse rose before us, so close that you could not see between them. We both fired, as you would say, "into the

brown," and we brought down two brace and a half. This was on the south side of the wood, where the birds were wild. When we had picked them up, and deposited them in our game-bags, we turned back through a narrow belt of woodland, and Cartier told me that we must "stalk" very cautiously. We did so, and at last I saw daylight between the trees. We crept on; and then Cartier showed me a little square of barley, which had not grown clear to us within twenty yards.

"Do you see," he asked in a whisper, "that little brown patch about twenty-five yards off?"

"Yes."

"Let us fire into it together. Take good aim, and run with me."

We fired together, and then ran. We had killed ten partridges, two flew away, and another ran into the wood. It was rare sport. I hear that you English always make them fly before you shoot them. That is a great *bêtise*. You should shoot them as we do, sitting, at least if you have such a *chasseur* in England as Jacques Cartier; for me, I do not think you have.

"This will do," said Jacques. "Now we will have an excuse for anything. Let us walk now as we never walked before."

Twilight came, and then darkness. We were walking and talking very pleasantly over a smooth field, when we came to what seemed to me a large rose-garden, as indeed it was. We passed to the left of this, and I observed a mass of trees to my right, level with us. I thought that we were in perfectly flat country; everything was level as far as I could see, and there was only one light—the light of what seemed to be a large café in front of us out on the plain. At once I heard the sound of two horses approaching us.

Jacques Cartier said, "Be silent and firm; speak only in German."

The two horsemen came slowly on until we stepped aside. Then one said, "Whom have we here?"

"A young gentleman, sir, going to school at Trèves," said Jacques, readily.

"You are a Frenchman," said the horseman.

"Yes, sir, I am the gamekeeper of his father, a worthy gentleman, M. Schneider, who has estates at Pont à Mousson."

"What have you got on your shoulder?"

"Game, sir. May I?"

"Yes," said the jolly outpost. "Leave a brace over at the café yonder with Mademoiselle Marie Cartier. She and I are what you would call *au mieux* together. Tell her they are from Private Ringsdorf, her lover."

Cartier caught hold of my arm. "You are too old, and she is too young, for you to be her lover," he said.

"You are right, my Frenchman," said the German. "She is but thirteen, and I am thirty-five. Yet she is like my little daughter Gretchen away there in Pomerania, and I love her."

And so they rode on. I, for my part, loved the rough German from the way he spoke of Marie Cartier. I thought it so good that he should love the child because she was like his daughter. Cartier, however, cursed him for an impudent German, and then said to me,

"You must go in there alone, and you must stay there all night. Find out if this Marie he speaks of is my neice or not. You must be no one, and know nothing. You must meet me to-morrow at the Toison d'Or, at St. Pierre. Any one will give you the route. Mind you be cautious."

"But where are you going?"

"Right down over the cliff into the lower town, by a way I know. It is dangerous. I have done it before, but not so heavily laden as I am now. Go in, listen to everything, and say nothing."

"But over what cliffs are you going?" I asked. "There are no cliffs here."

"The most inaccessible ones in the world," he said. "I have to go down them, with a chance of being shot by these infernal Prussians, to get to our own people at the Cheval Blanc, in the lower town. Remember what I am, and where we are."

"But what are you? and where are we?"

"I am a French spy; and we are on the glacis of Luxemburg."

CHAPTER XV.

I APPROACHED the café quite boldly; what had I to care for? It was an adventure, or seemed likely to end in one; and that I loved. If there was no adventure, I was determined to make one; and indeed I did. I fell in love.

"You will allow that that is something of an adventure, I think.

I had partridges on my shoulder, and I went in. "Hola, messieurs et mesdames," I cried in French, "who will buy partridges and hazel hens here, then?"

"Here is a pretty little Frenchman," said a Brandenburg hussar. "What price are thy partridges at, then?"

"Luxemburg a brace, and South Belgium for the lot," I answered, "always excepting one brace for Mademoiselle Marie, the neutrality of whom is guaranteed by England."

There was a roar of laughter at this joke. I notice that it is not very difficult to make Germans laugh at political jokes. They get very few at home. In fact, the Germans are by no means smart at political jokes: even *Figaro* and the *Petit Journal pour Rire* can beat the German at political jokes. Your *Punch* stands supreme in Europe as regards both social and political jokes; but your *Punch* is an exception. The Germans are far wittier on social questions than we are, but in politics we can beat them hollow. Why? Because we tasted a freedom in 1789, the taste of which has never gone out of our mouths. You may imprison Rochefort and shoot Ferré; but, with all our faults and follies, we will speak the truth in Europe—at least as *we* see the truth. There is one thing you can never do, try you ever so hard—you can never stop the tongue of a Frenchman or a woman.

Now here were these honest Germans in this café on the glacis of Luxemburg. The least educated among them knew far more than ever I was likely to know. The smallest drummer-boy there might have thrashed me; yet suddenly with my French wit I was master of them all, by the mere power of repartee.

"Suppose, then," said the Brandenburger, "that we seize the brace of partridges destined for Mademoiselle Marie. What will England do?"

"She will send her ironclad fleet up the Moselle to Metz," I answered; "nothing is impossible to her. One of her lords, before the Crimean campaign, proposed to send her fleet into the Caspian Sea."

A geographical joke always takes among the Germans, next to the English the greatest geographers in the world. This one took, and there was another roar of laughter.

"But suppose," said the Brandenburger, "that we chose to invade England, and conquer her?"

"That would be no doubt possible," I replied. "In fact, the great Napoleon had some idea of doing so; but after Trafalgar he did not see his way to it, and turned on you Germans as the easier prey. You know the result."

The Brandenburger got sulky. I wished him to be so.

"We won Waterloo," he said.

"The greatest mistake in the world," I said. "The English, with their raw levies, won Waterloo. The English troops who

beat us out of Spain were never at Waterloo at all ; they were in America."

"It would have gone hard with the English if we had not come up," said the Brandenburger.

"I doubt that," I replied. "Wellington never lost a battle or a gun. He had done better at Waterloo before six o'clock on the 18th than ever you did at Ligny."

"We had Napoleon against us."

"So had Wellington. Napoleon looked at your army, and beat them. He never saw the English army but twice, and in both cases he was defeated."

"You are fond of the English army since the Crimea," said the Brandenburger.

"And before," I said. "They have systematically beaten us, as we have beaten you."

"We may beat you yet," said the Brandenburger.

"It is possible, but not probable," I said. (Oh, if I had dreamt of what was going to happen to us!) "But this is not the question. Who is going to buy my partridges? German money not taken. Neutrality of one brace guaranteed by England. In case of any dispute arising, I refer the matter to the arbitration of Lord Derby, the President of the United States, and Mademoiselle Marie." I felt a touch on my arm, and I turned and saw her. It was all over at once; the boozing Germans might go home.

Go, honest, hard-fighting, hard-thinking, honest fellows, go your way; leave us to go ours; there is room enough in the world for both of us. Make love in your own way, if you like; but read from *Romeo and Juliet* by our French lights. You are slow and sure at your love-making, and you assert that you understand Shakespeare better than we do. Possibly; yet do you understand *Romeo* and *Viola* as well as we do? I think not.

You dull Northerners, you cannot understand your own Shakespeare. With us, some brilliant spark in early youth leaps from one soul into another, and burns there for ever. In one instant *Romeo* is in love with *Juliet*, and death alone can part them. It was so with me.

I turned and saw my fate; a little girl, wonderfully beautiful, with large blue eyes, and blonde hair falling down over her shoulders. She turned her face to mine, and said, "You are *Valentin*"; and I said, "You are *Marie*."

It was all over. I had seen my love. I was not much like *Romeo*, for my hair was tangled and my face brown, and the blood of the partridges had stained my shirt; yet I had found my *Juliet*.

I tell things too fast; I was nearly mentioning Romeo and Viola together. Put me as Romeo, and then understand, if you English *can* understand, that I had not found my Juliet, but my Viola. My darling is not Juliet, but Viola.

Oh, my pretty love, my innocent sweetheart! where should I have been without thee? In the horrible midnight of disaster at Sedan, where one's heart was burnt to ashes, who was that pretty boy who tended me so faithfully and who helped the brave Englishwoman to carry me out of the flaming Bazeilles? Was it my own wife, my little bride of sixteen, dressed like a soldier of the line? I think it was she.

But it was on the glacis of Luxemburg that I saw her first, and I kissed her; and I heard the Brandenburger say, "Habet!"

CHAPTER XVI.

BANG went the gun from the bouc down below our feet, and there was a general clatter of sabres and bayonets. The Prussians were going, and had to go very fast; they had been sitting here drinking and amusing themselves until the last moment, and if one of them was too late for the raising of the drawbridge, he would, as you say in England, "catch it." What would be the pains and penalties inflicted on a young man who was left outside the fortress all night, I cannot say.

I am cool now, and I can resume; the affair understands itself quite well. I am a Frenchman, and can argue with any one. I will argue with you, although my argument goes against the French. If the French had submitted to discipline as the Germans do, and as your English young gentlemen do, this disaster could never have occurred. However, I argue like this: if our officers and our men had attended to discipline as the Prussians did, we might have won.

The Prussians dashed out of the room, and I was left alone with Marie. A certain kind of Frenchman, like a certain kind of Irishman, never hesitates in love or war. I was one of these Frenchmen; I had not exchanged twenty sentences with Marie when I asked her to marry me. She at once consented, and, in fact, we are married now; but that is of no moment at all; at least, not for the present. You will perceive that I imitate the manner of the inimitable M. Victor Hugo in telling my story, but I am crippled, because he has the latitude of fiction, whereas I

am bound down to the inexorable laws of fact. I can only say that in style I copy M. Victor Hugo, the great master of prose in this age, in the passage that follows.

We were alone, and I kissed Marie once more.

"You will marry none but me?"

"None."

"There is blood on your shirt," she said; "*is it sang des Prusses?*"

"It is *sang des perdrix*," I answered.

"You joke, you make *calembours*. Lay down your game and let us walk."

"Whither?"

"Through all the world, but at present on the *glacis*."

"And Mère Hortense?"

"She is asleep."

So we innocent children stole out, leaving Mère Hortense asleep behind the buffet, and we went on hand in hand.

By the rose-garden.

By the little cross which marked the place where the officer fell in the duel.

Past the old cemetery.

Past the little auberge of Madame la Tige.

To the drawbridge.

A gentle whistle from Marie caused it to be lowered in a minute; and then—

Past the Cheval Blanc.

Past the Hôtel de l'Europe.

Past the post-office, the gaol, the barracks, the convent, and we were in Luxemburg.

(Here follows a long description of the fortress and town, which the editor has been obliged to excerpt. M. Valetin Schneider has copied the style of M. Victor Hugo a little too closely. The editor most deeply admires M. Victor Hugo, and would stand any amount of his narrative; but when he gets antiquarian, the editor must really take care of himself.)

(Note from M. Valetin Schneider): The editor objects to M. Victor Hugo's style of writing, and I of course submit; I am quite unused to narration. A friend of the editor tells me that he considers Victor Hugo the greatest humbug in Europe, who is seldom amusing without being improper. It seems now that Frenchmen must submit; but surely all the terrible faults and stupidities of M. Victor Hugo must be half redeemed by the tender and beautiful scenes in the convent in the Rue Picpus, in "*Les Misérables*." I am not here to judge, I am only a Frenchman.

Everybody knows we are pretty humble now. Every donkey may kick a dead lion. I will write no more in the style of M. Hugo.

(Here follows a very violent attack on the Bavarians, which the editor has omitted, as tending to no good. The editor begs his readers to remember that M. Schneider is in the same position as a high-feeling Englishman would be had we lost Hampshire (including Portsmouth), with Kent and Sussex, permanently; that London was half destroyed; that Windsor was a heap of ruins like Meudon; that the Archbishop of Canterbury had been shot; and that the House of Commons no more dared to meet in London than they dared to fly off the clock-tower, but were meeting at Oxford, as in old times. Heat of language must be excused to M. Valentin Schneider under such circumstances; we must allow him to continue his narrative. He is very angry at times, but his bark is far worse than his bite.—Ed.)

Marie and I found ourselves in Luxemburg, with the drawbridge closed behind us. This, you would say, was not only indiscreet, but improbable. As for the indiscretion, I am one of the most discreet of youths, so that answers itself; as for the improbability, why, the fact actually happened, and therefore I argue that being a *fait accompli*, a thing actually done, it cannot be improbable.

An Oxford student tells me that I am wrong. He says that some of the greatest facts in history, facts which no one denies, were utterly improbable. He speaks of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the battle of Trafalgar; he says that both those things were highly improbable, yet he argues that they are *faits accomplis*. I cannot argue with that young man—I was educated by the Frères Chrétiens—I only say once more emphatically that a thing which actually happened cannot be improbable. It pleases you English to amuse yourselves with the logic of M. Louis Carroll. I think that his logic is all wrong from beginning to end. How, then, I beg of you, could *la petite* Mees Alice have seen the noble poem of Jabberwocky (German, I regret to say) *reversed* when she got *through* the glass? I say that M. Louis Carroll is all wrong, and that Mees Alice would have seen Jabberwocky just as it was printed. I am, for my own part, no casuist, like M. Louis Carroll; but I will defy his casuistry here. Again, I beg of M. Louis Carroll to explain to me why he dared publish a poem so wicked as that of "The Walrus and the Carpenter." While the Latin nations have been living on the purest sentiment, the Teutonic nations have been going from one grossness to another. The wicked ballads of M. Louis Carroll are worthy of

the *Fliegende Blätter* of Munich. M. Louis Carroll fancies that his political allusions can escape the microscopical eye of a Frenchman. Not at all. That ballad of "The Walrus and the Carpenter" has a political signification. The walrus is the Emperor of Germany (Monsieur Tenniel, a Frenchman surely from his genius, has made him very like); the carpenter is the Prince Frederick Charles—all German princes (may Heaven confound them!) learn trades; about the old oyster, who refused to go out walking with the walrus and the carpenter, I am puzzled. It could not have been the French Emperor, because he did go out walking—that is to say, he mounted to horse, and took that little oyster, his son, with him. Also M. Thiers followed the walrus and the carpenter. I rather think that the oldest oyster is the Comte de Chambord; but I am not sure. Humpty Dumpty, who nearly smiles the top of his head off, is evidently the late emperor; and the allusion to "All the king's horses and all the king's men," is at least premature, not to say indiscreet. I do not, as a thinking Frenchman, believe that the Comte de Chambord will give the slightest assistance in putting Louis Napoleon on this throne again. Yet this political satirist, this M. Louis Carroll, hints that such an effort will be made, and made shortly. The English do not understand politics at all; and it would be much better if M. Louis Carroll would attend to his duties as a professor, instead of irritating a very high-spirited nation as the French by political poems like that of "Humpty Dumpty." The *fish* are the English, that is patent. Look at the shameless political intention of this passage, when the French ask the English to stop supplying arms to the Germans :—

"The little fish's answer was,
'We cannot do it, sir, because——'"

That is bad enough; but there is worse behind. With regard to your great public satirist, M. Louis Carroll, I say that he is all wrong. Look how he writes about Gambetta's appeal to Lord Granville :—

"But he was very proud and stiff;
He said, 'I'll go and wake them if——'"

Exactly the thing he did not do, because his coronet was at stake. He never dared to rouse the latent republicanism of England and of Europe about his ears. Hear your M. Louis Carroll again, with the Alabama claims hanging over his own shoulders :—

"And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but——"

The door is shut for ever to you English, just as much as the bridegroom's door was shut to the five foolish virgins. You saw us down, and, by the memory of Inkerman, you never raised your hands to help us. May you be forgiven! I pass like a Frenchman from folly to seriousness. I think that that allusion to the five foolish virgins made me so suddenly serious. Perhaps also it was recollection, for, in the course of narrative, I am only just inside Luxemburg, and on a slope of turf above the bouc lie down with Marie near me, while the whispering wind went through our hair and moved the grass about our heads.

She said to me,

"I have not seen you for so long, Valentin. I knew nothing of you, but I knew that I should love you."

And I said,

"Darling, I love you better than Jacques Cartier."

So the little Paul and Virginia courtship came to an end for that time.

CHAPTER XVII.

You make love, you English, in one way, we in another. I think, for my own part, that you are stupid in your love-making, and that, moreover, you leave it too late in life. Is it conceivable that a fat rentier of forty years can be pleasing to a woman? For me I do not know. I should think not.

Mind, I say nothing of our *mariages de convenance*; that is a matter I do not understand. I am too young. It would seem that any mature woman would marry any man with ten thousand francs of rentes in France now. In England, I am told, the price for a clever and handsome woman is still higher; but of this I know nothing. It is possible, as I allow that the rule in the great towns is different from that in the provinces. I only know that my father urged on my marriage with a penniless girl, as you will see.

I want again to be heard. I will dash at any young unmarried German whoever was born, with my bayonet, but I am *afraid* of those Landwehr men who are married. *They carry two or three*

lives in their hands, and I am afraid of them. Married men fight with the ferocity of desperation, and with ill-humour; unmarried men fight for fighting's sake, with no *arrière pensée* and with good-humour. I could give instances in our war, but your own poet Tennyson has found out the secret about the terrible power of the Landwehr. I don't admire English poetry myself, it seems to me entirely unmusical; but your Tennyson has an idea now and then :—

“When all amidst the thundering drums
Thy soldier in the battle stands,
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
One moment while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for them and thee.”

I don't like the Landwehr at all, and I have seen a good deal of them in Lorraine. Let me ease my mind. Fiercer soldiers or gentler citizens were never seen. One of them came to us as we lay together talking on the slope at Luxemburg, and he said :—

“Children, you will be cold here. Rise, and go into the town. When you are old enough, you will fall in love with one another, which will be a good thing if you reflect on three matters. That you two, if you fall in love with one another, are bound to go through eternity together. Eternity is like space, perfectly illimitable. Of eternity we know nothing; of space we know nothing beyond the double *nebulae*; but we all know that time and space mean the same thing, and are illimitable. Life is but one small episode in eternity; as consciousness and recollection began at birth, so consciousness and remembrance will end at death, except in the case of two souls which are brought together as yours seem to be. Conceive your two selves standing on the double *nebulae*, and looking into space. You must allow space—it is impossible not to allow it; there can be no end and finish of things. There is no end to things—there *can't* be. For me, as a Pomeranian, I believe that there is only one God, and that He is infinite and governs all. Whether space is filled with matter I do not know; I should think it was.”

“In the meantime?” I said.

“In the meantime,” he answered, “I think this, that you had better go to your friends in the town. There are French spies about, my little lad, who know nothing whatever about the

infinities of space, and who don't know the map of their own country. Just go to some respectable house, or I shall be forced to have you locked up. You are young Schneider. Your precious friend Cartier is somewhere in the town. Tell your father that he had better sell out on the German side, and move to the double nebule. Tell Cartier to mind what he is about in case of war, or we shall hang him. You French are perfectly idiotic; but that is no matter. Remember that life is only an episode in eternity, that space is infinite, and that this little girl ought to go to her bed. When the *culbute générale* comes, you may remember the name of General von Alvenstein the younger."

"General," I said, "you spoke of *culbute générale*. What will be the watchword on that day?"

"Paris," he said, laughing.

"That is not the word," I said.

He thought for a moment, and then he said—

"Châlons, then."

"That will not do," I said. "Is it Sedan?"

"Try Cologne or Berlin, boy, and take that little French girl in out of the cold. Nobody is likely to try Sedan except a lunatic."

So Alvenstein the younger stalked away over the slope above the bouc, and left us watching him as he went. It is all over now, and you shall hear how we got through it. But the other night Marie and I were sleeping together, and she suddenly shook my shoulder. I asked her what was the matter.

"Valentin, Valentin!" she said, "strike a light."

I did so, and then she spoke.

"Valentin," she said, "General von Alvenstein was here in the room, at our bedside."

"My darling," I answered, "he was killed at St. Privat, and you yourself put a bouquet of autumn crocuses on the helmet on his grave."

"That is true," she said; "but he was here for all that. He said that life was only one episode in all eternity."

I quieted her, and asked her—

"Did he say anything more?"

"Yes; he said that there were one hundred thousand upturned feet appealing to Christ for justice, and that Christ had turned away his head from the world."

"Were the feet French or German?"

"Both."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARIE and I went to a cousin of Mère Hortense, who kept a wine-shop in the lower town, to which she directed me. The cousin was an old lady, by name Christine, who seemed to expect us somehow, for she opened the door a little way, shut it again at once, and did not seem in the least degree surprised at seeing us. Marie was taken by her up to bed at once, and then the old lady came down to me again, and began getting me some supper.

"And the news from Champagne then, my pretty little gentleman," she said ; "have you been to the camp at Châlons ?"

I answered, "No."

"Hah ! I would like to see the dear French army. We are all French here, you know."

"And indeed I am French also," I replied, but I had time to say no more, for there was a loud trampling of men outside, and a halt at the door. Immediately after a sword-hilt was banged against the door, and a loud German voice called for admittance.

Mère Christine was equal to the occasion. In one instant she had pushed me down on the settle before the fire, and caught up a blanket which she threw over me, saying, "Tuck in and go to sleep. When you are awakened, be stupid and know nothing at all. Don't open the door till I tell you."

At the third beat of the sword-hilt at the door, not twenty seconds after the first alarm, I sleepily cried out, "Who is there ?" for I was a French boy, and had my ideas. "Who is there ?" I said, in a whimpering, sleepy voice.

"Hauptmann Fischer," was the reply ; "open your door, you treasonable old Jezebel."

I believe that I should laugh if I was going to execution. I laughed now, but I laughed more when I heard a window overhead opened, and the voice of my new friend, querulously from the open window on the second story crying out, "Aux voleurs ! aux voleurs ! au feu ! au feu !"

The transcendent old conspirator had torn her clothes off, as she afterwards told me, and was looking into the street in her—well, in her night-dress. I laughed as never boy laughed before, I think.

"Come down, thou ridiculous old lunatic, and let us in," said the Hauptmann, laughing ; and I gathered that Madame Hortense's cousin was looking rather absurd in the moonlight. Her tone changed in an instant.

"Herr Hauptmann Fischer," she cried in German, "dear and

highborn gentleman, I will put on my clothes and be down directly. It is very late, and I am only a lone widow, but I will get my clothes on and come down." Then she began yelling from the top of the stairs to me, while she was apparently dressing, "Valentin! Valentin! Sleepy boy, let the gentleman in at once, do you hear? Holy Virgin, how the boy sleeps! Is he dead?"

I arose, but now, having learnt a lesson out of the old lady's book, in my shirt alone, shivering and yawning, and I undid the bolts with my bare feet upon the cold stone floor. The Prussian guard were in the room at once.

The Hauptmann took me by the two shoulders, and looked at me in the face; he said at once, "This is young Valentin Schneider. Boy, where is Cartier?"

I told him frankly that I had not the least idea, and he saw that I was speaking the truth. "Put on your clothes, little gentleman," he said, "you will catch cold. I see you speak the truth; but would you have told on your friend had you known where he was?"

I replied, "You might have burnt me alive, and I would not have done so."

There was a murmur of applause from the whole guard when I said this. The sentiment seemed to meet their views entirely. A young man of Bonn (the young men of Bonn are generally the rudest among the Germans) knelt down and put on my socks for me.

This was young Muchnitz. He lay quite close to my brother, and from the position of the two bodies, I am inclined to think that they had been assisting one another before they died. It is awfully strange, yet perfectly true, that my brother died bare-footed, and that the three young men who lay with him behind the hedge in the potato field had only their stockings on.

It is most absolutely certain, that although we may never know the details, the 17th of the French line were surprised in their beds above Fond de Givonne, in the early morning. I found four young men lying dead together under a little hedge on the top of the cutting. All four had their boots off, and one had been sleeping without his stockings, probably from sore feet. It may be suggested that the camp followers had stripped them. That is absolutely ridiculous; before the war heated itself into fury, the Germans were most careful of the dead, and in fact made one take one's hat off in the presence of the corpses. Besides, how was it that with the exception of these four, I saw nothing which looked like the plundering of corpses among so many?

However, I am, after the manner of that master of fiction, Eugène Sue, getting discursive.

By the time I was dressed, the old woman was partly dressed, and came into the room with her gray hair down like Madame Macbeth, an awful figure, fit for any murder in the history of the world. Madame Macbeth, did I say? Try Judith; try Salome, the daughter of Herodias. She came in wanting nothing but John the Baptist's head in a charger, to make a perfect murderess, and she said,

"What will the good Hauptmann order to drink then?"

At this point I went off in an *éclat de rire*. What you call at school the *bathos* was too much for me. The Germans, such as understood French, laughed loudly also, and the Hauptmann said,

"Come, mother, we only want to be friendly. We want Jacques Cartier. You will get yourself into serious trouble by harbouring him. Potz tausend," he said, turning to me, humorously, "your father sends you out in pretty company. Do you know, for this old fool would never understand, that the Ordnance Department here have been robbed of certain very important plans?"

a blank. "I am fairly that I had not the wildest idea of such an at all. Don't be so. These Luxemburgers would do anything, and seconds after these plans; and we believe has handed them to there?" for al, Jacques Cartier. If he will give them up he may there?" I shall take our own course with him. Is he in the

"Hauptmann's?"

"Hauptmann's soul, no!" said the old woman.

I believe it came on my mind afterwards that the Roman Catholic laughed is the most accommodating in the world, for a more head of ring lie was never told under the sun; but she got quit of the opportunity.

"Well, I must search the house at all events," said the Hauptmann. "Sergeant, go forward. Young Schneider, you after with us."

in the cellars there were beer and wine; on the ground floor thing suspicious; on the first floor nothing particular, save that opening a doubtful-looking closet a very tall broom, which had then set on end in that closet, came majestically down on the Hauptmann's head, and knocked his helmet on to old madame's shoes, which gave rise to complications and apologies. We searched the whole house over, save one room which the old lady wished to be spared.

"It is little Marie's bedroom," she said. "You all know little Marie, of the glacis, Messieurs. You may surely trust an old woman's word, and not awake the girl. She has come in on a visit to me."

"A dear little soul, niece to the very man we want. Go in, old woman, tell her to cover herself up, for we must search here in spite of your word."

Mère Christine went in. Almost at once we were admitted. A light was burning, and we saw before us a sight which none of us ever forgot. A very beautiful child sitting up in bed, with her hands folded on the counterpane, and her hair falling round her in masses like those of Fra Angelico's angels. A child who seemed to wonder (ah, you English cannot act)—a child who was amused at the invasion of her bedroom by these good, quaint savages, the Prussians. The room was searched, and nothing was found. Of course not. The Germans made their adieux with all apologies, and left Marie sitting up in bed, with all her clothes, and Mère Christine's clothes also about her, to keep her warm.

The little heroine had got her uncle in bed with her, boots and all!

CHAPTER XIX.

MÈRE CHRISTINE told me to remain in Marie's bedroom while she showed the Prussian gentlemen out. I did so with much modesty, standing with my face to the staircase, down which the Prussians were being escorted by this good woman, who stood at the head of the stairs with a candle, entreating them to take care how they stepped. "For, Messieurs," she said, "the stairs are very old, and my landlord is not a good landlord for repairs; landlords are never good to solitary old widows like me. Ah! if my good man Max was alive, we should have had these stairs mended. Take great care, Messieurs, the narrow stairs are to the right." (Here a big young man of Andernach went thundering and crashing down to the bottom amidst roars of laughter from his comrades.) "Ah! Monsieur has hurt himself, I fear;" and so the old lady went on, holding the light above the retreating leather and brass helmets.

I much regret to say that, in spite of all our troubles, I have

must
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always an inclination to laugh at those helmets even now. I never can forget them groping down that narrow winding staircase, with the old Frenchwoman holding the light all wrong, and giving them utterly wrong directions. I know that it is immoral and undignified to laugh at our conquerors, but I cannot help it. The English laugh at the French; the French, again, caricature the English and Germans. The nation which most habitually caricatures itself is the French. We have laughed ourselves into a pretty state of affairs. I see that you are making all your leaders and politicians ridiculous in *Vanity Fair*. You will reap the fruits of this. This is done, I believe, by an Italian.

Well, I laughed when I saw the pickelhaubes go downstairs, and I laughed more when I heard the door banged behind them. I turned again into Marie's bedroom, and she was sitting up in bed laughing also, with her finger on her lips.

"My little angel!" I said, "these German dogs are gone. Have you been frightened?"

There was a great heave in the bed; her uncle put himself out sideways, and in another moment Jacques Cartier, with tousled hair, stood by her side, grinning from ear to ear.

"Here is a little heroine for you," he said, "never flinched for a minute, though she knew that her wicked uncle had the plans to steal the bed; or, to be more correct, that she had them in her at all. There is not a finer girl in all France. Did I bruise you at all?"

At my boots, darling?"
second. You frightened me out of my wits, uncle, when you began laughing, and made the bed shake so. I thought that we were all undone."

"I could not help it," said Jacques Cartier, "Mère Christine was so clever and *bizarre*. I am born to be hanged but I should laugh at the scaffold, I think. Now, lie down, pretty love, for M. Valentin and I have something to say. Here comes Mère Christine."

I went up to Marie's bed, and bent down and kissed her in all boyish loyalty and admiration. She threw her arms round my neck, and drew my face close to hers, so that my hair and hers were mixed together. I wondered at this favour very much, until she whispered shortly and sharply in my ear, "Valentin, you fool, be careful. Make him destroy those papers, or we are all in trouble; he has committed felony. He is a receiver of stolen goods."

Oh, the dissipation of the romance! Still I took two kisses more, and got two smart boxes on the ear in return. I then turned to Mère Christine and Jacques Cartier, and I found that

Mère Christine was preparing to light the fire, a matter at which I very much wondered.

"You see, M. Valentin," said Jacques Cartier, "that I have so far succeeded in my object in getting into Luxemburg. Well and good. Now I have to get out again. Of that we will talk presently."

"But, Jacques, dear, you cannot get out."

"Can I not? You will allow that I got in."

"Yes."

"You will soon have to allow that I can get out again. *Bon.* I may or I may not. In case I do not, you must attend to me with all your attention."

"Good," I said. "Can we not write down anything?"

"Nothing," he replied. "I am about to burn everything. I am going to tell you what you must tell your father, and no one else. You must mind what I say very carefully."

I determined to do so, and I told him so.

"I have done hitherto all that your father asked me. I have endangered my life for him this night. If I am taken here, I shall never get out of the prison at Trèves at all, because I have become a receiver of stolen goods in his interests. Well and good, I am a Frenchman after all. If I am taken, nothing must be found on me. You will go free, I shall go to prison. You must tell your father these things, and be sure to forget none of them. The plan of the Prussians is to refortify Luxemburg by star forts, a mile from the enceinte all round. By doing this they violate Dutch neutrality, and are therefore committed to anything. I have here the plans of those forts, but I must burn them; nevertheless, assure him of the fact. France is negotiating with Holland for the sale of Luxemburg, and Prussia will fight sooner than give it up. In case of war now, France could not stop Germany short of Chalons. Your father should back up General Niel in every way. Our army must be reorganised. Can you remember all this?"

I said it over to him.

"*Bon,*" he said. "Now we will burn these papers," and to my horror into the fire went a whole pile of Prussian staff maps and plans. Some of our precious friends had stolen them; Jacques Cartier had received them, and now he was destroying them. I was a felon by construction. I said so.

"My dear," said Jacques Cartier, "there is no felony in politics."

I rather doubted that, but I said nothing on that point. I only asked, "How are you going to escape?"

He laughed. "You must go a long way by yourself now," he said. "Opposite the church you will find a shop; in that shop are maps. You buy the map which contains the Eifel forest, and you come as fast as you can to Bittburg. I will meet you there. If I am taken, go straight home; no one will stop you. If you hear nothing of me, go there. If you go home, tell your father to *sell out in France*."

There was a little time in deliberating where all our things should be left. In the end, I took charge of the carbine, a large number of cartridges, and about eight hundred francs. Jacques Cartier took the shot-gun and a game-bag, and prepared to start; how, I did not exactly see, and so I asked him.

"I am going out of that window when the signal comes, and along the roofs of three or four houses. We shall have a messenger by-and-bye."

In about an hour there was a tap at the window; it was opened, and Mark jumped into the room barefooted.

CHAPTER XX.

I was to leave the house, and go by Trèves to Bittburg alone. Meanwhile, Jacques was to join me at Bittburg, and I was to send from Trèves the following telegram to my father:

VV. T. P. S. V. N. I. A.

It would be impossible for any one to make out this telegram, from the mere reason that it was absolutely simple, and that Cartier and my father were in perfect confidence. When I say perfect confidence, I mean that my father was in as much confidence with Jacques Cartier as he was with any one; that is to say, he had sent out Jacques Cartier as a spy, but had sent me to watch him.

Let us, however, examine this telegram, and see how easily the cleverest are cheated when two men understand one another.

First, VV.

That is simply "Vendez, Vendez." Sell at once. My father sold out all his rentes immediately, and bought into the English Three per Cent. Consols. He said afterwards that those rascals

of English would fight for their money, and that they had twenty miles of sea-water between them and a gentleman. You see, my father was one of the old school, and did not like the English as I do. Now we come to

T. P. S. V. N.

That is to me pretty plain. "*Tout est Perdu Sans la Vie de Niel.*" I think that Jacques Cartier was right here. I think that if Niel's scheme of the re-organisation of our army had been carried out, and if the Radicals had not opposed it, we might have been in a different position. I cannot say, but certainly Niel's scheme was better than Gambetta's. There is the same difference between these two as there is between Epimetheus and Prometheus. Now we come to the last letters of the telegram—

I. A.

"*Il's Arment,*" I read it. Certainly it was perfectly true, and my father acted on it. I think that my father rather wished the Germans to win in what followed. I rather think that his interests, as well as his inclinations, went that way. For me, I would have swept the streets for a living had France won.

Now, I had the telegram, and now Jacques was to be got out of the town. It appeared, on consultation, that we must at once communicate with Père Hugon, who kept the tannery down on the Alssette. When I say that he kept the tannery, I only mean that he kept it from fire. He was a very poor old man, who watched the premises by night, and who slept all day. Some one must go to him. I of course determined to go.

But I was stopped at once. "I should have difficulty enough in getting out of the town myself," they said. "Marie must go." And at last I consented to let Marie go, with the reservation that I was to follow her twenty yards behind.

Marie was very soon dressed and let out. The street was very quiet as she trotted along, so quiet that the twenty yards diminished to fifteen, then to ten, then to five, and at last to nothing at all; so that when we came to old Père Hugon's tannery I had my arm round her waist. When we got to Père Hugon's tannery we knocked at the door, and he opened the window three stories above, and cried out, "*Au feu!*" just like Mère Hortense had done.

"Be quiet, you old fool," I said.

Whereupon he began crying out, "Aux voleurs !"

"You old idiot," I said, "you will have the Prussians on us directly."

He went for a light, and reappeared in a large pair of gold spectacles, through which he looked at the bouc, the moon, and the stars.

I cried out impatiently, "Come down ; the patrol is in the next street." And then he shut the window.

I spoke the truth ; the Prussian patrol *was* in the next street, and was on us before we could get in. Fischer was in command of it, and he said to me, pausing as he passed, "Get your man out of the town quietly. If there is any difficulty, go to von Alvenstein."

"You mean Cartier ?"

"Yes. He has no business here : get him out quietly."

I had some spirit, and I asked, "What has he done ?"

"Ask that in two years' time," said Fischer and passed on.

Old Hugon admitted us. I opened the conversation by saying that Jacques Cartier must be got out of the town in safety. Old Hugon took off his spectacles, and, ordering Marie out of the room, stroked his beard, and said,

"That is very easily done."

"I am glad to hear it," I said ; "I thought it was, difficult."

"Has he got the plans of the outlying forts on him ?" asked old Hugon.

"No," I said ; "they are burnt."

"Hum ! What an ass is Jacques Cartier ! Did he believe them real ?"

"They were real," I said, but with a little wonder.

"Young goose," he said. "Those plans which Jacques Cartier took so much trouble to steal were carefully prepared for the French market. You met von Alvenstein ?"

"Yes."

"Von Alvenstein is not in the secret of those plans. They were prepared at considerable expense (for the Germans) on purpose to be captured by spies. The fool Cartier has burnt them. Just like him. Well, tell your father to sell at once, and buy into English funds. If they respect our neutrality, it is all which we can hope for."

"But, sir," I said, "France can fight for herself."

"And get beaten," said old Hugon, who was Parisian born. "Tell your father that in two years from now we are ruined ; and now get out of the house. I will see Jacques Cartier all safe. Go home and to bed. Start in the morning for Bittburg, and

you will meet Cartier there. Remember that you are a spy, and are watched."

I took Maria home, and kissed her as she went to her room. I was very uneasy in my mind about matters. But I had a holiday before me, and I knew that two years' drill at Metz was coming to me. I had an idea that I was passing now, or about to pass, the pleasantest time in all my life. So, in the early morning I roused Mère Christine, and I went in and said good-bye to Marie; and then I took my bag, my fishing-rod, and my carbine, walking out of the streets of Luxemburg as though it belonged to me. Passing out of a certain gate I heard one Prussian sentry say to another, "That pretty boy is a French spy. He looks too good for such work." I turned at once and said, "Sir, I am no spy." The German said, "Your face betrays you, boy, you are not." "Arrest him," said two or three others; and arrested I was, to have coffee with much milk in it, Bretzels (a delicious form of food) and butter. They let me go at last, those jolly Germans, and stood looking after me. I went down the road, between the high-piled rocks by the little river. I ought to hate them, but I love them. I ask, is not the world large enough for both of us?

Why, look you, English, at your own case. What did Napoleon the Great write to your Prince of Wales, when Napoleon had lost all? "The most constant, the most generous, the most powerful of my enemies." The English had the principal part in sending him to St. Helena; he the idol of the majority of the French. Many Frenchmen vowed eternal hatred against the English: your name was a name of infamy to most Frenchmen. At Waterloo the Emperor cried out in the last disaster, "Mon Dieu! ils sont mêlés ensemble"; that was true. Then the English and French were against one another. Forty years later they were mêlés ensemble once more, at Inkerman—Guards and Zouaves shoulder to shoulder. These hatreds do not continue themselves, my friend. If you are as young as I am, you may see French and Prussians stand by shoulder to shoulder, in defiance of the world. Have you not seen it yourself in the boxing matches at your public schools?

However, I must get away on the road to Trèves, by the road to Bittburg.

CHAPTER XXI.

I WAS now entirely alone, and I found that to be extremely pleasant. I loved the society of Jacques Cartier beyond measure, yet there was something very pleasant in being entirely alone.

There are probably few things more beautiful in the world than the exit from Luxemburg, on the road towards Trèves. Behind you are the great bridges spanning the glen, above and around are yellowish grey scraps and pillars of rock, fringed with copse-wood and vineyard, before the glen goes on winding away towards fairyland, where there are no fortifications and no Prussians. The river dances merrily on at your side, and you can gather flowers, or fish, or sing, or lie down and sleep; you can do anything you like.

And if you are very young and in love, you will have every now and then that feeling which the learned call pre-cordial anxiety. That is to say, you will be anxiously wondering where a certain young lady is, and what she is doing. I am not sure whether that feeling is pleasurable or painful. Men of the middle age sometimes say that they would give all their wealth to feel it again.

You see that everything groups itself round one pure and holy object, and for the first time in your life you feel that you are totally unselfish. You are raised into a higher and nobler atmosphere.

Here, for instance, by the river is a flower, the "*Impatiens noli me tangere*." How beautiful it is, deep yellow with pearly green leaves! *Bon ciel*, how splendid it would look in her golden hair! There must be a trout there where the water rushes down so freshly; we will put our rod together and have him. A splash, and the speckled beauty lies panting on the grass, among the cowslips. I wish she were here to see him, what would she say at our luck? Why, she would say, sir, that you, being so transcendently happy yourself, ought not to deprive one of God's creatures of its happiness: so you (or at least, I) take the hook gently from the trout's lip, and send him wriggling away free.

This is sentimental folly. I quite allow it, but I never knew much good of a young man who was not a sentimental fool when he was in love. When the shattered brown keep of St. Etienne burst on my sight suddenly, I gave a cry of gladness, but in an instant more I was very sorry. *She* was not here to see it soaring in the summer air.

I walked swiftly when I did not stay to play, and struck the Moselle at Wasserbilig. The river was rushing on majestically, green now in the early summer, a noble flood, dashing onwards to meet her bridegroom, the Rhine at Coblenze.

“ As the silence that is broken
When the wished-for word is spoken,
And the heart hath a home where it may dwell,
As the sun and moon together,
In a sky of splendid weather,
Is the meeting of the Rhine and the Moselle.”

I was fairly in Germany now. What idiots our people were ever to think that we could make the Rhine provinces French! Will the Germans make Alsace and Lorraine German? Will the British ever make Ireland English? I leave these questions to MM. Bismarck, Erckman-Chatrian, and the late Lord Londonderry, commonly called Lord Castlereagh. Since the utter submission of the slave-holding states in America, and since the new movement for home rule in Ireland, I have rather given up imperial politics as a hopeless business. For the Irish, having an amount of freedom which we shall not get in a century, say they are a down-trodden and oppressed race. In the name of heaven, how? Still, I only speak as a Frenchman, as one who is puzzled by your insular politics, which I think ridiculous.

At Wasserbilig I met a German boy, and we were comfortable together. He kept my clothes while I swam in the river, and then we talked. He was a very nice boy, he hated the French in general, but he liked me in particular. We had sausage together and we talked.

“ You hate us ? ” I said.

“ Yes,” said the German boy, “ we do.”

“ Why ? ”

“ For many reasons.”

“ Old reasons or new ? ”

“ Not for old reasons so much ; you beat us heavily, and without cause, until we beat you at Waterloo ; no, not for old reasons.”

“ The English beat us at Waterloo,” I said.

“ They held the ground till we came up. They did nothing more than that. They would have been in the forest but for us. You say that because they beat you through Spain.”

“ Alas ! ” I said, “ wherever the English met us they beat us. England is a name of bad omen to us.”

"You seem to be happy enough together now," said the German boy, "you are robbing and plundering in company. There is no safety for an honest nation. Look at Pekin."

I apologised for the summer palace spoliation as well as I could.

"The English and the French are the greatest robbers on the face of the earth," said the German boy. "England has appropriated India without a shadow of right; and you French, wherever you came you robbed and stole. In our public library at Trèves there is a copy of the 'Galerie Française;' a catalogue of pictures stolen by Napoleon, which he had to give back."

I asked him if he would kindly hand me my right stocking, which lay on the grass beside him. I was getting rather the worst of the argument, you see.

"Mind," he said, as he handed me the stocking, "when our turn comes we shall take what we want, and do, not as we have been done by, but simply do what is necessary for our own safety. However, *we* are friends. Where are you going?"

"To Trèves."

"I also. Come, and I will show you Eiger. Come in my boat, I have a boat below."

This was entirely delightful; the German boy let his boat float down stream and talked to me the while."

"French boy," he said, "is your name Schneider?"

"Yes, Valentin Schneider."

"You are to be let go where you will, and do what you like. My name is Von Lindenau, son of the Librarian at Trèves. We have heard much of you. We hope to get your father on our side. You, however, are French, and will remain French."

I rather thought of throwing him out of the boat when he said this about my father; but he looked very cool and strong, so I only said, with great heat, that my father was no traitor.

"No, no," he said. "See where we are passing. This is the mouth of the Sarre. What battles have been fought here for eighteen centuries!"

My good humour was restored, and I begged his pardon for being angry. He bent over from his oars and kissed me. "I wish you were a German," he said.

"But about the battles?" I asked; "where are we now?"

"In the rift in the hills, which in old times divided Roman and Celt, and which now divide Teuton and Celt. Look to the left instead of looking into my eyes."

I looked to the left, and there was the great monument of Eiger towering over the trees. I held my breath; it was the

most magnificent specimen of Roman work I had ever seen. And then we floated on.

"When you force it on us, Valentin, we shall push our frontier farther forward, or perish as a nation. If you ever say your prayers, pray that you and I may not meet, for I like you so very much."

And so we floated on, talking about many things, and at last he said, "Here is Trèves."

I got my things out of the boat and went with him along the street, for he told me that he would show me the way to the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Passing the corner of one street I clutched his arm and said, "What is that?"

"The Porta Nigra," he said, coolly, "the gate between the Roman and the Celt in old times, now the gate between the Teuton and the Celt. In a year or two we shall pull it down and build it up again to the west of Metz."

I went to bed after my dinner at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. I rolled myself up in the sheets, but I could not sleep. I looked out of window and saw the horrible watchmen in long black cloaks, who frightened me. They looked like fiends; but they were not fiends, because they were very kind to an old Frenchwoman, who was very obstreperous and who apparently could give no account of herself. I thought that this old lady looked very like Mère Mathilde, but I was not sure. At last, trying bed again, I got to sleep. But whatever turn my dreams took there was the black gate at Trèves being moved, stone after stone, off my chest, and all through the middle of the night I was engaged in removing each stone to the west side of Metz. Towards morning Marie appeared (in my dream), and pelted all the stones merrily right and left, and so I slept heavily until the garçon came and shook me roughly by the shoulder.

Then I rose, and having had my breakfast, went on the road to Bittburg. I left Trèves, the beautiful, by the northern gate. We wished to have her, but we shall never get her now. The question is, shall we get back Strassburg, or even Metz? However, the peace of continental Europe is impossible until we do.

CHAPTER XXII.

I WALKED very much faster than an old woman could possibly do, and in one day I had arrived at Bittburg, twenty-three miles.

Bittburg was by no means interesting, and I stayed only one day and two nights for Jacques Cartier. I found it to be pleasanter without him than with him; for, dear fellow as he was, I was compelled to confess that he seemed always in trouble, and what is more, seemed to be always getting me into trouble. I was rather tired of it.

I had no fault to find with Bittburg. I had a little room which opened on the street, a rather dull street. But my room was very pleasant—I think the best room in the house, with a bed in a little alcove. The good woman of the house paid very particular attention to me, and the head of the gendarmerie (as we should call it in France) came to see me. He told me that although I had no passports, I could go in any direction I liked. This was very civil, for indeed I had no passport at all, and I thanked him very much.

"Little gentleman," he said, "I have a son just your age."

"I should like to know him, sir," I said.

"Well, you know his cousin."

"My friend of yesterday?"

"Yes. Now, my little man, I would not have sent him out on such an expedition as this to save my life."

I hung my head.

"I do not think that your father is right. Yet your father is a good man. See now, don't cry. Go where you will. Make a holiday and enjoy yourself. I think a wolf will come to your door to-night, little wehrwolf."

"A wolf, sir?"

"Ay, with bare legs," said the Prussian, laughing. And lo! a wolf did come.

I had gone to bed; but I could not sleep, because of what he had told me about the bare-legged wolf coming to the door. At about twelve o'clock at night, I, lying awake, heard as plainly as possible something moving at that door. I got out of bed and looked out through the French windows. The street was still and empty, and I could see nothing at all. I went to bed, and had dropped off to sleep, when I heard as plainly as possible a very small voice, coming from I know not where, say, "Valentin, my feet are so cold."

I had been dreaming, and I had dreamt of a picture by M. Horace Vernet, of the retreat from Moscow, and of a poor conscript lying on the cold snow, with his feet turned up. I notice that the pictures of M. Horace Vernet are apt to come to one in one's dreams, I think, more than those of M. Gustave Doré. I dreamt, I say, of this picture, and how our poor French lay down and died with their feet to the sky.

I thought that I was asleep. But the voice seemed natural. Once more, "Valentin, my feet are as cold as death. Let me in, for the memory of old Sedan."

"Old Moscow is what the ghost means," I said aloud. And I was fairly roused by the voice saying, "Not Moscow, Valentin; Sedan, Sedan; let me in."

I was awake now, and I went to the door and opened it.

My brother Mark stood before me, shivering in the moonlight. (You will remember that I did not know him for my brother.) He said,

"Let me come in and lie on the floor, it was so cold outside that I could not wait till morning."

"Were you waiting for me, Mark?"

"Yes, Mère Mathilde is after you to fetch you back. You are to be at Metz for two years; now is your only chance of pure liberty, my darling. Jacques Cartier is stopped; we can go on. Let us fly in the morning, and I will show you the most wonderful things in the world. But my feet are so cold."

"Get into my bed, Mark, it is warm, and then we will talk."

He was not long in accepting my invitation, and I rolled my Jersey shirt round his feet to warm them. I rolled the coat of one of the 17th of the line round them at last; but they were too cold for warming then.

"Valentin," he said, when we were in bed comfortably, "you must come on with me."

"Whither?"

"To the Eifel. You are your own master, you can go where you choose. Let us escape to-morrow morning and leave those others to find us. Mère Mathilde has been detained at Trèves for being turbulent: we are utterly free; let us go on until we are sent back."

Before we dropped to sleep, I had agreed. When I said "yes," he rolled his heavy head over on my chest, and said, "We must fly early, my feet are very cold." And then I went to sleep in good earnest, and dreamt persistently of Moscow and the passage of the Beresina. I dreamt also of Marie, and of many things; but dreams are always of the past, never of the future.

Or I should have dreamt of the warm feet now twined in mine, cold for ever. I should have dreamt of a shattered wall and a very pretty boy in a drummer's dress, against whose breast General Von Alvenstein put his finger, and said,

"Madame Schneider, you must go back. I know all; I cannot allow you to follow these two English ladies."

CHAPTER XXIII.

I HAVE often seen summer days which ended in thunderstorms. I have been out, for my part, gathering spring flowers in the afternoon, and at night have arrived home drenched and miserable. For me now it is all equal. Providence has afflicted us bitterly, and Marie and I pray that the affliction may do us good. You English are unable to understand the depth of our affliction : everything has gone well with you. I cannot perceive how you could have helped us, yet you will forgive a Frenchman for going half mad over his ruin.

To pleasanter matters. I was by no means half mad when I awoke Mark at Bittburg. That time was the summer day of my life. I was young, innocent, pure, audacious, and I was bound on a great holiday. Mark and I stood alone in the street together, without one single care, or one single hope which troubled us.

Stay, there was a single hope, and only one. The hope of penetrating beyond that sheet of yellow rolling down, which spread above Bittburg, and of seeing the wonders which those downs enclosed. There was a hope, and it was realised.

Mark and I went arm in arm for a little ; but then we parted, for we were in the forest, and there was but one track through the copsewood. I had my fishing-rod, and he told me to get it ready. That was not exactly possible, as the forest was so thick, but I did my best. I had my English trout tackle perfectly ready in five minutes after Mark and I sat down by the side of a little stream which he told me was the Kyll.

That is a very lovely stream. Your English streams are purer, possibly, but I have seen few of them, and must not speak. Your Itchen is wonderfully pure, yet not, I assert, more pure than our Arques. To compare the Kyll with the Arques or the Itchen, would be absurd. I do not do so. I think that for perfect beauty of surroundings, the Kyll would surpass any English or French river. One place, where the stream comes through the magnesian limestone was so beautiful, that I christened it "The Nymph's Bath." A young Englishman, of the county of Derbyshire, now studying as a cadet at the college of Woolwich, in England, tells me that these glens in the Eifel are far surpassed by the glens in Derbyshire. He is of the most excellent, this young man from Woolwich. He says that he has a plan by which there shall be no more war at all, and that all nations shall live in peace for ever. His name is Jones, and he belongs to your engineers.

Possibly, I am wrong in giving his name, because it might make injury to him, and stop his promotion. That, however, I do not believe, with a nation so generous as yours is.

Jones happened to be fishing on the Kyll, when Mark and I arrived at the banks of that stream. Jones happened to have hitched his flies up on the other side, and so happened to meet us without a rag on his body, he having taken off his clothes to recover his flies. I put it to you as a young English gentleman whether you can tell another gentleman to be a gentleman if he is stark naked. I can't. I asked him whatever he was doing there; and he told me to ask my grandmother (she has been dead these twenty years), and also offered to knock my head off. I declined both propositions; and by degrees, as his clothes went on, I saw that I was speaking to a gentleman.

Oddly enough, Mark says that he knew he was a gentleman from the first, because his feet were so white and clean, and that his nails were like filbert-nuts. Well, that is only what Mark said.

Jones got his clothes on, and I saw at once that he was a gentleman. Jones spoke French very well for an Englishman, and he thought that my brother Mark was a gipsy; to tell the truth I thought so too. Jones was puzzled about me entirely, and took me for granted, as something of which he had not read in Cuvier.

"I see you have an English rod," he said. "Let us fish up the stream to Kyllburg—I on one side, you on the other. Your handsome gipsy friend is coming, I suppose. Do you know this country, my lad? I want to see Kyllburg."

"Fish up, and you will see it, Englishman," said Mark.

And so we worked up the stream. We caught in the slow parts of the stream chub and grayling, in the sharper parts of the stream we got trout. Before we got to Kyllburg, the Englishman had left me. I was just landing a small chub with the assistance of Mark, when he came back.

"Come with me, my boy," he said.

I left my rod and went with him. He pushed aside the briers and brambles, as I followed him. We stood by a still pool by the river, and I looked for the first time at Kyllburg.

Prince Frederick Charles, do you ever dream? If you ever dream, try to dream of Kyllburg. Until you awakened its echoes with your drums and trumpets as you marched to ruin France last year, those echoes had not been awakened for four centuries.

A mass of tangled vegetation, and through the vegetation the noble red sandstone cloisters asserting themselves. I am as

utterly unable to describe Kyllburg, as I am to describe Mont St. Michel. I looked on the formulated red sandstone cloisters, and the (apparently) unformulated vegetation, and I said to the Englishman,

"Tell me about this."

He almost whispered,

"This is the death of an idea," he said; "the men who piled those beautiful stones together thought that they could have peace in this world. You see the ruin of their work. Women and idiots may get peace, but no man. Be as silent as death, boy. Give me your carbine; is it loaded?"

I gave it to him.

"Watch those roses, those wild-brier roses," he whispered to me; "how prettily they trail over that pillar. The dead monks might even admire the ruins of their own creation. Give me another cartridge."

I did so.

He raised the carbine to his shoulder, took a steady aim, and fired right into the roses.

In one instant a desperately wounded wolf bounded out and stood at bay before us with grinning fangs.

For the life of me I cannot say why I ran on to the wolf to prevent a second shot. It was a kind of mad, stupid instinct. The beast was on his haunches when I approached him. I heard the Englishman shout, "Stand aside, I have another cartridge." I heard Mark say, "It matters nothing, he is the wolf's brother, he is wehrwolf." Then the beast met my eyes and turned over stone-dead before me. And then, as it seemed to me, I passed into the garden of the Arsacidæ, and remained there some time.

The fact was that my ague was on me again, and I had fainted away. Mark says that I fell flat on the wolf, and that the Englishman was half mad at not being able to put another bullet into him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I PROMISE that no grass grew under our feet. Mark struck away from the main road at once, through a dell fringed with copse-wood, a dell which carried its waters towards the Moselle. I can

see his pretty bare feet brushing through the impatiens and the geranium as I write. The stream was a very small one where we hit it, but other streams came in and made it larger and larger. At last there was a cascade, and I wanted Mark to go down and bathe under it, but Mark said, "No, we must push up aloft at present." And so we clambered through the woods until I was nearly tired.

"Mark," I said, "we are following in a path."

"To be sure we are," he said, "and we are nearly at the end of it. Now load your gun, and keep perfectly steady. When he rises at us, fire here."

My pretty brother took my hand and laid it on his jugular vein.

"Between the cheek and shoulder, you know," said Mark. "He will in all probability charge, in which case jump over his back and dodge behind a tree till you have loaded again. Don't let him catch you between the legs. He is not difficult to escape."

"But *who* is *he*?" I asked, not, I confess, without anxiety.

"Who is who?" said Mark.

"I mean, whom am I going to shoot?"

"Why," said Mark, "Old Moses, to be sure. I love you, little gentleman, and I think you love me. We are out on pleasure together, and I want to give you the best pleasure. Our people tracked old Moses to his frank, and I have given you the chance of killing him. I can tell you that the priest at Mauderscheid would give me twenty-five francs to put him where you are now."

"But *who* is Old Moses?" I once more asked.

"Why, don't you know? He is the largest wild boar in the Eifel. I know of one larger in the Ardennes, but old Moses is the largest in the Eifel. The priest at Lazel had a try at him with one dog, and he killed the dog and wounded the priest in the leg. That was when he was quite young, a mere pig. He is an old boar now, and will spare nothing. It is a matter of life or death to attack him."

"I think," I said, "that some other amusement would be better."

"You need not be afraid, dear," said my unknown brother. "If you miss when he charges, I will stand close to you and throw myself on him while you reload. I shall have my knife. I may kill him with it if you have wounded him with your shot; but if I fail, for mercy's sake don't hesitate a second time in firing for fear of hitting me. Remember that your life is worth a

hundred times mine. I am only a poor dog, and you are a gentleman."

"Mark," I said, very quickly, "I don't like this adventure; it is extremely dangerous."

"Why, of course," said Mark, "it is very dangerous—the sort of thing for an Englishman. Why, an English officer in India will walk up to a tiger and shoot him stone dead before he has time to spring. We are not less courageous than the English."

I said "Certainly not;" but I could not help wondering whether the English officers who shot tigers on foot felt exactly the same anxiety about their personal safety as I did when I was going to attack the great wild boar of the Eifel. I reflected, however, that I was a Frenchman. I am told that your Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar signalled to his fleet, "England expects every man to do his duty." I think that is a very fine sentiment. The duty was to fire the guns with rapidity and precision until we and the Spaniards had left off. That duty was done well and we were beaten. (It was that grand *bête* Napoleon, who never, in passing, was a Frenchman at all, but a Corsican, an Italian-Greek, who forced out Villeneuve). The duty of the English was to stand by their guns. *My* duty was to follow Mark.

I beg of you to reflect.

When a nation loses honour and the power of courage, she has lost everything which is worth having. That nation can *live* no longer—she may *exist*.

In matters of national honour the slightest boy or the weakest woman can give the key-note to a trumpet which will rouse a nation to utter desperation and to ultimate triumph. You want examples? *He ! bien donc :*

The death of Madame Garibaldi ended in the freedom and consolidation of Italy.

"What song is that which you English boys sing called 'Casabianca'?" Casabianca was a French boy, yet there is surely not an English boy who does not envy him his death.

Look once more at Gambetta's hair-dressers' and linendrapers' apprentices, who at the last moment rode with scarlet trousers and white cloaks straight at the Prussians before Paris. They could not fight, but those young men were not dastards.

Those who undervalue the courage of the French might find themselves terribly mistaken.

Why do I say this? Why, because I wish to draw a moral. I am not in the least degree answerable for the morality of my

moral. Take it as you find it. The members of a great nation *dare not be cowards*.

No, depend upon that. For me, I am not particularly courageous ; for example, I used to cry when I was left alone in the dark when I was young. But mutter the word "France" in my ear, and I will go to the stake at once. As for crying, you cannot turn that against us, because your own terrible Collingwood, when he was sent on board ship at ten years old, sat down on a gun and cried like a baby ; and when the lieutenant came to him and told him not to cry, and said they would be kind to him, little Collingwood offered the lieutenant the cake which his mother had given him. I think that your Collingwood was almost worthy of being a Frenchman.

The last remark, however, is a little too strong. I am no Chauvinist, but I do not acknowledge the equality of any nation with the French. At the same time, I had better recur to the actual facts which occurred in this wonderful boar-hunt.

The boar's frank was among a lot of tangled briers. I could actually see the beast's hide as he lay asleep.

We had a short conversation.

"You see his rump ? " said Mark.

"Yes."

"Now calculate where his heart is, and fire ; then load again like lightning, for he will be on us."

I heard a stealthy footstep behind me, and felt a touch on my shoulder. It was only a half-naked young man, one of the ubiquitous Carbonari.

"Fire straight through that rose," he said ; and I did so. It was like lighting a powder magazine. The beast, with a noise between a grunt and a roar, was on his haunches at once, looking round for his enemies. I had loaded again before he made an effort to charge. It was a feeble effort only. I put another bullet into his head and he dropped dead ; to ravage the potato-fields no more.

The young man took possession of him, and sold him to the landlord of the hotel at Trèves, as I afterwards learnt. Meanwhile Mark hurried me away over the hillside.

CHAPTER XXV.

"THERE are no vines here," I said to Mark.

"No," he said, "we are out of the region of vines. The vines here only grow about the rivers, and we are beyond rivers now—we are among the lakes. Climb this last hill bravely and you shall see one, such a one as you have never seen before."

How there could be a lake on the summit of the high down covered with short grass, I could not imagine; but when we got to the top I gave a loud cry almost of alarm, for I was on the edge of the Schalkenmar, and one false step would have sent me rolling down two hundred feet into the forty fathoms of water, which is without any shore whatever. As it was, one foot slipped on the slippery grass, and Mark seized me, for, heavily laden as I was, I must inevitably have been drowned had I rolled over.

There was a vast hollow depression in the hills about three-quarters of a mile in diameter, but only at one place a small cliff of rock. All round this turf sloped down nearly perpendicular into the water, the profound depth of which was shown by its being of a sapphire blue. Salt water shows the sapphire blue at forty fathoms, as our sailors tell us, but fresh water at a much greater depth. A German professor tried to fathom this lake, but found no bottom at two hundred and forty English feet. One of the horrible things about it is that it has no outlet at all, but is hemmed in on all sides by a perfectly level line of downs without a break. People who have once seen it never forget it. It strikes me with terror in my dreams even now. There is not a tree or a bush round it, and it is as terrible now when filled with water as it was in old times, when it was a roaring volcano, casting stones and fire all around the neighbouring country.

"What an awful place," I said, "what an awful land! But, Mark, is there no way by which the water gets out?"

"No," said Mark. "Once it was an opening out of hell, and the fire and smoke used to burst out, but the good St. Christopher, who bore Christ through the river Jordan, prayed to the bon Dieu, and the bon Dieu filled it up with water. And then Lazarus, who lies in the bosom of Abraham, prayed also the bon Dieu that He would let the water drip out of the bottom of it in hell, and cool the tongue of Dives in torment. The bon Dieu agreed to that, because He loved the kindness of Lazarus towards a man who had been unkind to him when he was living. So when there is a long drought, you can hear Dives crying for water, but when the lake is at its full height, Dives is silent."

"But——"

"Ah, wait; you do not know all. When the drought is very long, a shepherd's dog runs away, and, coming this way, goes down there, leaps into the lake, and disappears. That dog is one of the descendants of the dogs that licked the sores of Lazarus, which goes to ask Lazarus to plead with the bon Dieu for rain. You see Dives fed the dogs but neglected Lazarus, so they plead for him. After a dog drowns himself in this lake rain always comes."

I thought it highly improbable, but I kept my opinions to myself. "Who told you this—well—legend?" I asked.

"Mère Mathilde; and she said that it was a very good legend, because it shows that the bon Dieu has pity even on souls supposed to be lost."

"You must not say such things," I answered. "The story is a foolish story, an old woman's story. What does Mère Mathilde know of religion? Leave such things to the priest."

Mark promised that he would do so; and we had a little religious conversation, which showed me that he was actually ignorant of the very first principles of Christianity. He thought that Joshua was a Prussian, and that Samson had carried away the great gates of Thionville, and was afterwards engaged in the burning of Moscow. I decline to repeat all I gathered from him as to his notions of New Testament history, as we lay together in the short grass over the lake. For example, I asked him, "Who was St. Paul?" He answered that he was the Paris gentleman who had the contract for the tents at Châlons, but who had quarrelled with Marshal Niel. He had heard about St. Paul's having been a tent-maker evidently, but further than that he seemed to know nothing. "Who was St. Peter?" He was the Pope? and Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi would have hung him long ago, only Mazzini and Victor Emmanuel had fallen out, because Victor Emmanuel had discouraged the Carbonari. He appeared to have a dim notion of contemporary politics, but none whatever of religion. I asked him if he went to church. He replied, rather proudly, that he was not a woman. I could do nothing with him, he was lost in ignorance; but there are many such. I was determined to consult my father and mother about him. I had not taken my first communion then, but I made a secret vow that if Heaven gave me grace, this poor outcast, Mark, should go to the altar with me.

I burst into tears. I loved him so well, and yet we had no hope, no aspiration in common. He asked me why I wept; and before the sun set behind the hill, I had told him the whole great

story of the Redemption, and he sat on the grass and stared at me in wonder.

"Why, Christ was a hundred times greater than Mazzini himself," he said, "and the son of the bon Dieu! And He rose from the dead! Let us leave here now and seek Him. The Frères Chrétiens are wise men; they will tell us where He is. If we can find Him, as we will, we will tell Him how hardly we poor folks live, and He will mend that. Let us go hence, you and I, and seek Him through the world."

"But He has ascended into Heaven," I said.

"Up there?" he answered, pointing aloft.

"Ay, but He will hear us if we call on Him," I said. "He is not here, but He is risen. He will come again when the world is fit for Him, and then there will be peace."

"Let us ask Him to come quickly," said Mark.

We did so. We knelt down together on the bare down, and I prayed with him. I ended by praying that Christ would come as soon as the world was fit for Him, and give that universal peace which existed on the night of His birth.

We rose from our knees, and Mark said, "The world is not fit for Him yet. We must wait."

The answer to our prayer had come. On the opposite down, across the lake, was a squadron of Prussian cavalry—blue, silver, and gold—wending along under the westering sun. *We had got our answer for the time.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

"LEND me your carbine, Valentin," whispered Mark.

"Why?"

"I could pick off one of those men," said Mark. "Nothing would be more easy."

"And what would be the use of that?" I asked.

"There would be one less."

"You, however, would be hung for doing it, and so there would be one less on our side."

"That is true," said Mark, very quietly. "I did not think of that. Let us go round the lake and hear what they are saying. Be stupid, you Valentin; do not understand German. I might get my knife into one of them to-night, for all you know."

"Mark, Mark! have we not been praying together?" I said.

"Yes; and the bon Dieu sent an answer to our prayer in the form of a Prussian squadron. It is certain to me that the bon Dieu will have us fight. I will have one of those men before the morning."

"We are not at war, Mark," I said; "and even if we were, such an act would be sheer assassination. In any case it is against the laws of war."

"Laws of war!" said Mark; "you are talking nonsense. There can be no law in a practice which puts aside *all law*. What is the case? The Germans wish to ruin us, and we wish to ruin the Germans. That is fair, is it not?"

I said, "Yes."

"Good," said Mark. "In war you wish to kill your enemy. Is it not so?"

I said, "Certainly."

"Why not, then," said Mark, "stop all war by killing your chief enemy before the war begins? The assassination of one man might stop the whole thing. If on the opposite hill you saw Frederick William, von Moltke, or Bismarck, would you not fire on them?"

"Not in time of peace," I said; "that would be the act of a scoundrel."

"You are a fool," he answered, fiercely. "Give me that carbine."

He fell on me and struggled with me for it. He was stronger than I, but I retained possession of it, not, I am sorry to say, without bruising him heavily on the head with the butt end of it.

He was dazed and partially stunned. He sat up on the grass, and said, "May Heaven forgive you."

I was at his feet in one moment. "I only did it to save you, Mark."

"To save me, ay, I know," said Mark; "but you might have let me save France first. You have done a very foolish thing, and forty thousand dead men will curse you for ever. I could have hit that man, if you had not fought me. I cannot now, for my head is bad. Curse him! I might get my knife in his ribs, though. Look at him, and curse him!"

I was rather surprised at this outbreak of Mark's, and I was very much alarmed at it. I looked at the Prussian officer on the other side of the Schalkenmar. He was a tall man, who sat his horse well; and he had brought his horse to the very edge of the slippery gazon, and was looking into the lake, two hundred feet

below him. The distance was, as I now know, three hundred and fifty yards ; and if Mark had killed his horse, he would have fallen into the lake hopelessly. I felt that we had had an escape, and I felt also that I was with a very dangerous companion. I looked at the Prussian officer, and then I turned to Mark.

" Mark, if argument will do nothing, love may do somewhat."

" Well."

" Let us go back to Sedan."

" Let me kill that man first."

" No, no ; I will not have it," I answered.

" Well, then, see," said Mark. " You go back to Sedan, and leave me to kill him."

" You shall not do it ; I will kill you first," I said.

" My darling," said Mark, " do you think I would mind being killed by *you* ! I will stand up and you shall shoot me dead. You do not know what you are doing when you forbid me to kill this man."

" I will have no assassination."

" But, see, my brother ; he sits there with his horse's hoofs on the verge of the gazon glacis. We could kill him so easily now. Give me your carbine."

I held my carbine the tighter. " What is the use of shooting Prussian officers ? " I said rather vaguely.

" Not much," said Mark. " Kill one, and you get a dozen in their place. But this one surely has been given into our hands."

" This one ! " I said. " Do you know him, then ? "

" Do not you ? "

" Not I."

" Why, it is our bitterest enemy—it is the Prince Frederick Charles. You will give me your carbine, will you not ? "

Let us thank Heaven that such fearful temptations come seldom in the life of a man. My first instinct was to hold my carbine very tight, because I determined that, if the thing was to be done, I could do it myself, and not let Mark do it. Then I had a petulant wish that the Prince would go away, and not tempt me ; but the Prince sat in thought, and peered into the lake.

He little knew what awful danger he was in. One shot would have brought him and his horse down two hundred feet. But I could not do it. The carbine was loaded, and a wild duck flew over the surface of the lake. I pretended to fire at the duck, and so emptied the carbine.

"You missed him," said Mark in a whisper. "He sits there on his horse still. Give me another cartridge and your carbine, and I will kill him for you."

"On the contrary," I said, "we will walk round the lake and talk to him."

"That is very just," said Mark. "I give my word that I will not molest him. Let us hear what this dog has to say."

So, passing round the end of the lake, we came among the Prussian cavalry.

Mark was by no means a bad actor. I rather flatter myself that I am an exceedingly good one, though my friends disagree with me. At all events, Mark could act well enough to imitate me. Our rôle was the rôle d'*ingénu*, and we did it to perfection; at least, I did it to perfection—Mark, my brother, overdid it a little.

For example, we first came on two Uhlans with lances and flags. We spoke to them. Both Mark and I knew German; but our utter and entire ignorance of it then cannot be described. We knew nothing on earth but French. The two young men spoke to us in German; but we were so utterly and stolidly ignorant of that language, that they lost their tempers, and called us names. At this, Mark winked at me, and one of the young men saw him do it.

To put matters entirely right, and to disarm suspicion, I took Mark round and round these two young men, and discoursed about their personal appearance in French. I pointed out to him their eyes, their nose, and their moustaches. Finally, to crown all, I went up to one of the young men, took his foot out of the stirrup, and, holding it in my hand, pointed out to bare-legged Mark that the spur of the German was longer than that of the French.

You may destroy France, Poland, or Ireland, but you will never destroy the unutterable impudence of those three nations. And please, young English gentleman, who lives at home at ease, answer me this; Would you not sacrifice everything short of your soul to be friends with Ireland? You know you would. What we have done for Poland you would do for Ireland. To tell the truth, you are doing more for Ireland than any one has ever done for us. But, young English gentleman, think of old France brought down to this level. Don't be angry with us if we tear at our chain; you would tear at yours. We cannot bear it much longer. One desperate rally there will be, and then we shall die as a nation. But I wander a little. My argument is, that although we may perish as a nation politically, yet we shall still

remain as peculiar a nation as the Jews, in consequence of our illimitable impudence.

We left the two young Uhlans, and at once inspected the staff-officers. They understood French, and so my remarks told. I took Mark up to one solemn hauptmann, and discussed his personal appearance and the state of his horse. I took up that horse's hind foot, and held it in my hand, discoursing to Mark as to the bad shoeing of German horses. The hauptmann was beginning to get angry at this liberty; but I heard the staff-officer in gold spectacles, who sat next him, say,

"Let the boy do what he likes. He is mad. He is the little Schneider of Sedan. He sleeps with the wolves. He is a Carbonaro. Let him get on to the Prince."

I put down the horse's foot, and went on just as if I had heard nothing at all. Mark, however, was not so fortunate. The staff-officer in gold spectacles hunted him back, and I went on to the Prince alone.

I have known strong men, in good health, who were nervous at being presented to the Emperor. I, poor young lad, with many guilty secrets, was going alone to see Prince Frederick Charles.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE Prince Frederick Charles turned to me and told me to wait. I had never seen a real prince before, and so I looked at this one and examined him very carefully.

I was very much impressed with him. You ask me, as a Frenchman, "Did I like him?" I answer, as a Frenchman, that I liked him very much indeed. The most amiable princes I have seen are the Emperor Napoleon, the Crown Prince of Saxony, the Prince de Joinville, and Prince Frederick Charles. He looked steadily on his right, and at last he put his hand down on my shoulder, turned my face to his, and said,

"Well, my pretty little spy, you will not make any great success in your present business."

"In what business, your highness?"

"In the business of a spy," said the terrible Prince.

"I am no spy, your Highness."

"Your pretty frank face and your eyes tell me that. What is the distance between your house at Sedan and Madame De-branche's at Mézières?"

"I decline to answer that, your Highness," I replied.

"As if I did not know," said the Prince, laughing. "If every Frenchman was as loyal as you are, we should have great trouble with you. Where is that little scoundrel, Mark?"

I was utterly astonished at his knowing of Mark's existence. I told him where Mark was.

"Tell him to mind what he is about," said the Prince. "The pitcher that goes often to the well is broken at last. I am afraid that he is a sad little rascal. Can you ride?"

"Yes, sir; I can ride well. I had a pony once."

"And broke his knees on the chaussée in Bazeilles, I doubt not," said the Prince.

"Your Highness does not know Bazeilles, I see," I replied volubly.

"No; I was never there," said the Prince.

"Ah!" I said; "but you should go. The road—macadam, I think they call it—is an English road, with fine trees on each side."

"Trees, eh?"

"Yes, most beautiful trees. And also the street is not wide at all; and when you come to the end of the street, you can see right into Sedan."

"It must be a pretty place; but Fond de Givonne, that is prettier."

"One of the pleasantest places in the world," I said, proud of talking to a real prince. "You should come out and gather the autumn crocuses on the hill between Fond de Givonne and Givonne itself. Hah, dear prince, the view on that hill is lovely. You look straight into Sedan and beyond La Chapelle——"

The Prince turned on me and said, very emphatically, "Hold your tongue, boy. If you are a fool, remember that I am a gentleman. Say *no* more."

I could not conceive what he meant at that time; but when I saw the white Arabs of the Chasseurs d'Afrique wandering about riderless, masterless, seeking for water on the same hill, I saw that I was a fool and that he was a gentleman.

With all their Uhlans, they never found out one thing. The road, cursed by all Frenchmen for ever, which runs into Fond de Givonne, between the potato-field and the cornfield (as the crops were on the 1st of September), *runs through a deep cutting*. In five minutes more I should have told him *that*; but he was a gentleman, and stopped me. The road in their map is set down as level. I might have saved one thousand lives by telling him the truth; but he stopped me because he did not think it right

for a gentleman to get information from a boy, But here are the facts as I look at them. The horrible slaughter of the 17th of the line in the potato-field occurred simply because the Saxons were not aware that the road went down through a cutting. A Saxon officer told me that his colonel ordered the first company to double back through the second, when he came to this obstacle. He then countermarched his regiment round his centre, with what object I am unable to state, not believing in German regimental tactics; and *then* the French were aroused from their beds, "*than* which," said the Saxon engineer officer, "nothing has happened more disgraceful to the art of war since those turbulent riots which occurred during the civil war in America, and which it pleases the Americans to call great battles."

Well, the Prince was very good to me. He was cruel to us, you say. I ask, have *you* never been cruel? We were very cruel to his nation; it was his time for *revanche*. You English have been more cruel than any, except the French. You have no right to rail against the Germans for their punishment of us. We lost, and we have paid; we may pay in another manner some day. But you English, what right have you to speak of the Germans in this sanctimonious way? The quarrel was a very old one; it was fairly fought out, and the Germans won. We had to pay. But if you say the Germans were cruel, look at yourselves, my friend. How did you get and keep India? How did you get Canada? Last, and worst of all, how did you get your new provinces, one might almost call them kingdoms, of Australia and New Zealand? I see your answer in your eyes. They were inferior nations. Quite so; but we French are apt to be logical. Were the French and Spaniards at Saint Sebastian of the inferior races? No; I admire your insular Chauvinisms immensely, but you will hardly go so far as to say that the French and Spaniards belong to the inferior races. The man who says that the French did not fight well at Sedan is a liar.

I lose my temper. I heat myself unnecessarily. It is the French way. We are as proud as you are, which is saying much: and sometimes I enrage myself over this German occupation. Bismarck has been a fool about that. We would have paid him every penny, but he should not have insulted us by putting an execution in our house. And we have behaved very well. I know I should not like to leave a French army of occupation in England on such terms; very few of them would come back. But you, with the strip of silver sea, could repudiate any treaty forced down your throats in a moment of desperation, and you could hem yourselves in with an iron band, making commerce

impossible to other nations. You are the arbiters of the world's fate. Keep your trust, and keep it honestly.

Prince Frederick Charles might have been thinking of all these things, or, on the other hand (as is very probable), he might not. He, however, got off his horse, and told me to come and have mittagsessen with him. I complied at once, as a hungry boy would, and we sat on the grass together and had sausage and white wine.

The prince seemed to take a great fancy for me. At one time he asked me for bread, and as I was cutting it he passed his hand over my hair. Mère Mathilde says that he had a son who was drowned at my age. Of this I know nothing; I only say that the terrible Prince, who has left a red band on the map of Europe from Sierck on the Moselle to Paris on the Seine, seemed to me one of the gentlest and kindest of human beings. Look at your own Nelson. Was he not kind? See what he did at Naples.

We were so comfortable together that I should quite have forgotten that he was a prince at all, had it not been that a solitary lancer stood in front of us, lance to heel. I had got so familiar with the Prince, that I was going to ask him whether the young man might not dismount and have his dinner, when the young man solved the difficulty. He waved his lance three times to the right, jumped off his horse, took off his helmet and hung it on his arm, and then knelt bareheaded in the sun.

"Get up," said the Prince to me. "It is the King."

I rose and saw him. His face is familiar enough to all of us now, so I need not describe it. He held his hand shading his face, and he said, "Frederick, I wish to speak to you." They went apart—Frederick Charles on foot, bareheaded, and bending low, and they talked together, about what I know not.

Two gentlemen were left sitting on horseback, behind them were eight or ten Uhlans, as they are called; who knows why? I looked at these two gentlemen with great interest, because it so happened that I had never seen two such gentlemen before.

One had a dark moustache, and looked very wan and worn. The other was much older, apparently a very old man; but his beardless face actually looked younger than the handsome face of the man with the moustache. The old man had an immensely powerful face; but the younger one, though his face was very powerfully cast, had a restless look, as though he was either suffering or thinking—in fact, he was doing both.

I gazed on them intensely. I cannot say why, maybe I have some genius. As I was looking at them, the man with the moustache, who had evidently been riding hard, took out his

pocket-handkerchief to wipe his face. He dropped it, and I ran forward, picked it up, and gave it to him.

He took it from me, and smiled at me—such a weary, dull smile.

"You are a French boy, surely," said VON BISMARCK.

"Yes, sir."

"I should have guessed so from your looks and your politeness. This is a pretty boy, general."

VON MOLTKE turned and looked at me.

"He is a very pretty boy, indeed. Where do you come from, my child?"

"From Sedan, sir."

Von Moltke gave one glance at von Bismarck, and then looked over my head. I heard a deep voice say,

"What boy is this?"

"A boy from Sedan, sire," said von Moltke.

I turned and looked. Behind me were the King and Prince Frederick Charles; in front of me were von Bismarck and von Moltke. As I looked on the four stern faces I lost nerve. I cannot tell why, but I would have given anything to cry. I turned to the King, and I said,

"If you please, sire, I want to go to Mark."

The Prince (who spared Andun la Tige) said suddenly,

"This is a very nice boy, sire. Let him go to his brother Mark."

The Prince little thought that he was unconsciously telling me what I did not know myself. The King smiled kindly on me, and then they rode away. As they went I heard the King say,

"The boy is from Mézières, is he not?"

And Bismarck said,

"From Sedan."

Then I was on the bleak down alone. I saw the King, the Prince, von Moltke, and von Bismarck go trotting through the grass, followed by a steel-blue line of cavalry, over the hill towards the Gemunden Maar. There was no blood on their horses' feet then.

But I was alone on the down, and the wind in the grass at my feet whispered, "Whence comes this boy?"

And the swallows over my head replied, "From Sedan. From Sedan."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I HAVE now come to the end of my long summer's holiday, and take an entirely new position before you. I am from henceforth no longer the wandering French boy, but the young French student. Your English judges, I see, always tell the jury entirely to dismiss from their minds the very facts which they have been thinking of for the last three weeks in all probability; which seems to a Frenchman odd. I ask you, as a young English gentleman, to dismiss from your mind all that I have written to you previously. According to your English law of jurisprudence, that is entirely logical. You are now to know nothing whatever of Mère Mathilde and Mère Christine, of Marie, of Jacques Cartier, of Mark. Still less are you to know anything whatever about von Alvenstein, of the Prince, of the Emperor, of von Moltke, of von Bismarck. You must dismiss these people from your minds altogether. I have told you about these people, but it is not in evidence. Writing for the English, I adopt the English course of procedure.

It was extremely wet on the night when Mark and I got back to Givonne. We did not arrive there until past eleven. My father, who had not expected us at all, was still up, and let us in. To my unutterable surprise he kissed Mark before he kissed me. Then he called for Jacques Cartier, who came half-dressed out of the conciergerie, and he handed over Mark to the tender mercies of Jacques, saying,

"Get the boy some supper, and let him sleep with you. Valentin, come to my study."

My father might be stern, but he was never unkind. Yet I was a little afraid when he took me into his study counting-house, and ordered me to sit down. I feared that I had in some way offended him. I asked if my mother was well.

"She is not well, my pretty boy," said my father; "she and I are at variance on one matter, and she loves me and her country so well, that the little dispute has made her ill."

When he called me "pretty boy" (I am, as a matter of detail, not pretty at all), I knew that he was friends with me. I said, "I am sorry that you are at variance with my mother, sir. Could I say no word to mend affairs?"

"Yes," said my father, "you *might* say a word; but it would have an entirely opposite effect. Now you must sit still, child, and be examined. Are you hungry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here is supper, then. Here is sausage, bread, and wine Eat and answer. You cannot lie."

I did both eat and answer.

"Have the Germans begun their star forts outside Luxemburg?"

"No, father: there is nothing beyond the glaxis."

"What asses!" said my father, "they are going to observe neutrality; lucky for them if the French do. Why, child," he continued, "if either party respects the neutrality of that wretched little province in the struggle which is coming, the world will see an amount of chivalry and honour such as she has never seen before."

I could not understand him then, but I can understand him now. Had the Prince crossed that sacred territory, the matter would have been over sooner. Had the French, on the other hand, pushed across this territory and threatened the line of German communication, then Sedan would not have been written down on the pages of history in blacker ink than Moscow, the passage of the Beresina, or Waterloo.

Allow me to detain you one moment more. Ever since the great Revolution, the French have distrusted their generals. As I write this, I hear that Bazaine and Urich are to be brought to court-martial. I am ashamed of my countrymen. Bazaine and Urich were two of the noblest fellows who ever lived. Neither of them could execute impossibilities. Bazaine, it appears, from these Messieurs of Versailles, ought to have "*broken out*." Can a scorpion get through a ring of red-hot coals? I think not. After the glorious attempt of Gravelotte (which the Germans insist on confusing with the battle of St. Privat), Bazaine could never move. An English gentleman before Metz, for charitable purposes, tells me that on the 12th of September he might have made a successful dash at St. Marie aux Chênes. That I believe is true: but supposing he got through to Aubonne and Briey, where was his line of communication, I beg of you?

We must, however, attend to my father. My father said,

"Whom have you seen?"

"The king."

"Well, that is one matter. Who was with him?"

"Prince Frederick Charles."

"*Bon*; and then again?"

"Count von Moltke."

My father remained in thought.

"This looks very bad," he said. "Was there any one else?"

"Yes, one Count von Bismarck."

My father sat deep in thought, and then he said,

"I will go up and speak to your mother. Rouse Jacques Cartier, and tell him to have my horse ready in an hour."

I was utterly puzzled. The king's name, the prince's name, von Moltke's name, were all as nothing at all. My father seemed sleepy and stupid until he heard the name of von Bismarck, then he was utterly different. His face seemed to crystallise. He went upstairs to my mother, and remained with her an hour. When he came down he was dressed as for riding, with his English breeches and boots; and my mother, who was nearly crying, asked me if Jacques Cartier was ready.

I said he was. My father had the saddle-bags packed, and Jacques came in and took them away. Then my mother, my father, and I stood alone.

"Good-bye, sweetheart," said my father.

"Good-bye, well-loved," said my mother; "but oh, one word more. Schneider, should you desert your country?"

"What country?" said my father, not, I am glad to say, angrily.

"France," said my mother.

"France," said my father; "what is France to me?"

"Your country."

"I do not see it. My money goes a long way the other side of the Rhine just now. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. I have 300,000 francs in that bag, my love, and they will be in Frankfort in two days."

"But poor France, then," said my mother.

"If poor France cannot get on without me, she must do without me," said my father. "Mind what I told you about the boy and the girl. I made my will, and have left it with you. If the boy fancies the girl, they must marry; let them marry as soon as possible. In two years they will be ready to marry."

"But, Schneider," said my mother, "these fiends have turned on the Austrians."

"How do you know?"

"Here is the telegram," she said; and she showed him the telegram which startled Europe.

My father stood in thought for a moment.

"Why did you not show me this upstairs?"

"I forgot it," was my mother's feeble reply.

"Well, I am for Frankfort," said my father. "I thought that we were to be taken first; we are to come second, it seems. Valentin!"

"Keep your wits about you, and answer. Did you see no one save the King, the Prince, von Bismarck, and von Moltke?"

I thought, and said at last,

"There was a little priest, who was watching them, a rather dirty little priest. I remember him now; he gave me ginger-bread."

Jacques Cartier had come into the room to say that my father's horse was ready, and Jacques spoke over my shoulder.

"That would be Monseigneur Jubon, the Jesuit," he said.

And my father swore, or went very near it.

"Don't you see, monsieur," said Jacques Cartier, "that the object of these Germans is to puzzle us all? They make a most ostentatious demonstration on the French frontier just when they are going to attack Austria. When they are going to attack us they will probably raise a case against Serbia or Teheran. The worst of it is, that our Government is utterly hoodwinked. We could perfectly well take care of ourselves if we had a king, prince, or president, who ever heard a word of truth. Neither the Emperor nor the Empress ever does. You are going to Frankfort, I think, Monsieur?"

"Yes."

"The best place you can go to, sir; mind your money. Take this pass, and show it if any one stops you."

"What is it?"

"Only a pass from the Carbonari," said Jacques Cartier quietly."

"You will be guillotined some day," said my father, putting the pass in his pocket.

"The only wonder is that I have never been guillotined before," said Jacques Cartier. "I would not give much for *your* neck, with that pass on you, in two years."

"Will it be so long?"

"It will be longer," said Jacques Cartier.

"Jacques," said my father, "if everything comes to the very worst, mind the boy. Valentin, whatever comes, remember that Jacques Cartier is your second father."

My father rode away into the night, but what happened after we can only find out in part. He arrived safe at Frankfort, and deposited his money with the Rothschilds there, that we know. Then we know that he took Mark with him; and what is more, took Mark to London and Paris. That he is alive we know perfectly well, or if he is not alive his ghost must be, because we are rich through his means. But from the night when he set out for Frankfort on the eve of Sadowa, we have seen very little of him.

He was always a strange and mysterious man. In my opinion, he thinks that he should not have deserted France in her need. I cannot say. He was a good man, and my father. Alive or dead, I will always love him.

Mark came back from London like a gentleman. No more bare legs now. My mother never would kiss Mark, though she liked him, and let us sleep together. One night in bed, Mark told me that he was in for the conscription. Three weeks after, Mark drew a low number, and was ordered for service. Another three weeks and Mark came in on us, a glorious creature in scarlet breeches, blue coat, and white gaiters; 17th of the Line he was. As I write, I put his epaulet by my side now. Here is the writing on it: "17^e de L. 4^e. 69. 4409."*

Well, I will say nothing more. Many other feet were turned up to the sky on that fearful day of judgment, but none so dearly loved as my brother Mark's.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WELL, as I said, all was over with me. I was sent to the Lycée at Metz, whereas I wished to go to the Ecole Militaire. My father said, "I will have no soldiers in the family. To the Lycée." And so to the Lycée I went.

I had a beautiful new trunk, with everything which a French gentleman could wish for, but possibly not everything which an Eton young gentleman could wish for. The scale of luxury runs thus among schoolboys. The Prussian has nothing; the French boy has more than he wants; and the English boy has more than he can possibly utilise. Why the other day I saw Lord Afterdale, who had just left Harrow, and he told me that his aunt, when he went to that school, gave him a gun. Milor added to me in confidence, "What the Dickens" (that, you remember, is the name of your great compatriot, by whom you swear, as our religious women do by the holy saints), "what the Dickens," he said to me, "did the old fool think I could do with a gun at Harrow? The second master boned it and used it himself." I suggested that it was given him for purposes of self-defence, for we French are extremely spiritual, and, like an Irishman, are never at a loss for an answer. This theory, however, by no

* 17th de la Ligne.

means met his views. In fact, I could see, in spite of all his politeness, that he thought me very little better than a young man deprived of understanding.

Such is your insular Chauvinism. It is amiable and amusing, as is ours. Take care that it does not bring you to the same miserable fate which we are undergoing—for a time.

The Lycée at Metz is pretty much like all Lycées, and I rather think pretty much like most English schools. A strong boy, who is a gentleman, can get on by sheer strength of will. A weak boy, who is a gentleman, can get on by submission. A boy, who is neither strong nor a gentleman, has a very hard time of it. You do not know it, but we are more spiteful than you; yes, indeed, much more spiteful. A friend of mine was at school—a very rude school in London; he was a very gentle boy, and could not strike a blow hard enough to kill a bird. But he told me that he was not unhappy, for although he could hardly speak the language, the English boys, always brutally fighting among themselves, never laid a hand on him. Sometimes, he told me, they would dance in a savage and cannibal manner round him, but he soon got used to that. His father was an officer of Zouaves, and was killed at Inkerman. After this, my friend was fed carefully with buns and tartines. Yes, you English are not unkind, though you may be brutal among yourselves.

Well, as I am here in England, and can tell you the whole truth in spite of M. Thiers, we French boys at school are quite as rough, and even more spiteful than you English boys. As I must go with you to the Lycée some time or another, I had better go now.

To do anything in our family without the assistance of Jacques Cartier, was entirely impossible. Jacques has been sent over the frontier from Trèves, with a polite intimation that he was much safer on his own side of the border than on the German. The fact of the matter is, that there was much more against Jacques, both on the French and German side, than we knew of. The truth is, that the people I choose to call the Carbonari, are not particular. If they want a thing, they have a pestilent habit of taking it without leave. So *I rather suspect* that both Jacques Cartier and my brother Mark had rendered themselves subject to the action of the law which you call common law, in which case extradition might have been necessary. However, neither French nor Germans said one word about the matter, beyond telling Jacques Cartier and Mark to mind what they were about. And when all is said and done, the Prussians are the last people to complain about a few cocks and hens. A man must live. The

story of the pig I quite disbelieve. Jacques tells me that he never saw the pig at all, but that he had pork for supper. Now I think that is a very fair explanation.

However, I must not delay in defending my dearest friend. Jacques was sent to see me to the Lycée at Metz, and one morning at ten, he put down my box at the door, and rang. Then our troubles began.

The concierge opened the door, and unluckily knew Jacques.

"Well, spy," he said, "are you on the French or German side? which side has bought you now?"

Jacques shook his ten fingers in his face. Then he spat on both his hands, and then he boxed the ears of the concierge. I knew it was coming, but I would have died sooner than have spoken. Trying to conceal my laughter I passed into the courtyard, where nearly one hundred boys were in recreation.

The biggest of them, "cock of the school," you would call him, came towards me. "What do you want?" he said.

"Monsieur le Président," I said. "I am a new pupil."

"What is your name?" he said, and I saw that I must hold my own with him, for he was a *mauvais sujet*—a fat, gross, sensual young fellow, of about eighteen. Now I wish to tell you something. When any of you young English gentlemen meet a young fellow of this sort, and when he says to you anything insulting or prurient, hit him in the mouth at once, and you will never hear from him again. Of course, it is not pleasant for me to write these words, but pray attend to them. If a fellow like the one I describe says anything which you could not say to your mother, smite him. You say he would thrash you. Well, *be thrashed*; but before all, keep your honour. France has been beaten by Germany, but I do not think that any man in Europe will say that we have lost our honour.

I was like David to Goliath with this young man; but then, do you see, I was in love and pure, whereas he was neither. I have seen the same animal reproduced in Germany and in England. As I answered him, my love for my darling was tingling in my veins.

"What right have you to ask my name? I will give it; I am Valentin Schneider."

"He is a German boy, this one," said Leon; and the others gathered round him.

"You lie," I said; "I am as good a Frenchman as you; and the boy who says I am not had better not say so twice."

Leon saw that he must act at once. He seized me by my cravat. I, on the other hand, hit him on the mouth, tripped his

right foot with my left, and fell upon him, I regret to say, with my knees together. You must never do that ; it is too dangerous for an ordinary quarrel ; it is apt to end in rupture of the colon. Pray never do it. Jacques showed the trick to Mark, and Mark showed it to me. I write it down because it is the *least* dangerous of the fighting tricks which the Carbonari know. An old patriarch said to me once when I asked him about the use of the dagger, " Our *boys* can kill any *man*. But the English do not know anything about fighting at all."

I did not kill my fat friend, however. He did not even go to the *infirmerie*, because, do you see, the diet there is carefully kept down lest a boy should " put on æger," as an Oxford man expressed it to me.

The Maître d'Ecole and the President came flying out in their dressing-gowns, and I expected discipline. But no ; I was young Schneider, and young Schneider seemed to be a sacred person. Leon was forbidden to go out next Sunday, and two other messieurs had sixty lines a-piece because they had looked on without assisting me—a thing I thought grossly unjust, because I had assisted myself. It was very much like the courts-martial on Uhrich and Bazaine.

The concierge got terribly scolded for insulting Jacques Cartier ; not one word was said about Jacques having boxed his ears. Jacques and I had wine (awfully bad ; he *said* it was Medoc) with the President. And I was left at Metz—with a few kisses from Jacques, in exchange for which I sent some to Mark—in a burning hot fury of love, longing to distinguish myself, but seeing no chance. Only a civilian.

CHAPTER XXX.

I do not like a man who will speak badly of his father. I only say that I *think* I should not have done as my father has done. In my opinion Alsace is as much French as Ireland is English.

But he was and is a good father to me, and so I say nothing. If he had known Mark was his son, things would have been quite different. If I think that he failed in patriotism, I ask you why ? Simply because he wanted to get money for me !

Would I have done it myself ? No, not *then*. I would not have done it on any account at all. I would most certainly have

held every farthing in France at that time. I do not know *now*, I cannot say what I should do now.

You see that my father was not alone in the world.

My father's property was situated in the debatable region, and he knew that ruin would come to one side or another; and whichever way the ruin went, he had to calculate on his chances.

He was not alone in the world; he had my mother and myself to provide for. So he sent out Jacques Cartier who might lie, and myself who could *not* lie, to tell him various things, which even his friends the Jews of Frankfort could not tell him. (Hah! Herr Judenstrasse, you lost *your* money; you believed in the French, did you? when we win you will believe in the Germans, and lose it again.) My father after hearing my report, more particularly after my interview with the Prince and King, sold the larger part, nearly all, of his French property, and invested it partly in Bavaria and partly in the English funds.

Unpatriotic, yes. But my father's theory was that domestic needs ranked above patriotic. He saved his fortune and gave Gambetta 250,000 francs out of it. You see he had a wife and a son. I was very angry with him for a time, but——

Were you ever awakened by the whimpering of a child? Did you ever in your first sleep wonder where you were, and putting out your hand find that it was among the long silken tresses of your wife's hair on the pillow? Did you ever feel the little waxen fingers of the baby pulling at your moustache? No! well, then, wait until you have, before you rate your patriotism. Your sweetheart will tell you to go and die; your wife will tell you to go and live.

I have spoken before about the behaviour of this fearful Landwehr, whom we could not face. They were married men with children, separated by the inexorable laws of Germany from their wives. That is the reason why they fought more like devils than men; they wanted to get back to their wives.

When did the Northern American States begin to win? Unless History lies more than usual, she would say, "When the married men were called out."

My father was not in any way a fighting man. He was a financier. He withdrew his right, like Vinoy, at this time for the sake of my mother and myself. Do I blame him? No. He was as much German as French, and he took the German side, and sold out in France.

I wished afterwards that he had taken the side I took, that is, the French side. I believe that if he had known that Mark was his son, things might have been different. For Mark was such

a glorious creature, that I believe my father would have preferred him to me. And Mark was an unreasoning Chauvinist. It was not to be.

I had not been a fortnight at Metz when my father came to see me.

"So you fought your comrades on the first day, pretty boy."

"I only fought Leon."

"Here are two napoleons for you ; and so you are in love, eh !"

I answered roundly, "Yes."

"That is good," he said, "that is very good. I am in love with your mother at this present moment. You hold to this love, my dear boy. I have seen her, and she is worthy of you or of any boy. Would you like to see her ?"

"What would I not give to see her, sir ?"

"Would you give up your allegiance to France ?"

"No, sir ; I am a Frenchman, and will die one."

"Bravely answered," said my father ; "I, for my part, am not a Frenchman. But as regards the girl, she is here. I have put her with the Huguenot sisters to be educated, and you are to see her alone on Thursday and Sunday for two hours. Will that suit you ?"

I began some rapturous nonsense.

"Yes, yes !" he said ; "that is the sort of rant I used to talk to your mother. Now be good, keep pure, and work hard. That is all I have to say to you."

"Not all, sir. There are some scholarships for the Ecole Militaire. May I win one ?"

"They carry a commission," said my father, walking up and down the room.

"Yes."

He walked up and down again frowning, in thought. At last he said—

"I have given up everything for you. You are the only one I have in the world. If you win one of these you will be fighting in two years."

"Yes."

"And against Germany ?"

"Yes."

There was one wild sob, and then he said quite gently,

"Do it if you can. I yield. Can you tell me where that boy Mark is ?"

"No, sir."

Suddenly he caught me by the two shoulders, and said, "Valentin, turn your eyes on mine."

I did so.

"They *are* the same eyes," he said; "yet the whole thing is too utterly improbable. Valentin."

"Yes, sir."

"When you meet that boy, treat him as your own brother."

"I have always done so, sir," I replied; and my father went away.

I have often wondered whether Jacques Cartier knew the truth. I think not, for he loved Mark as I did. 1,200 francs would have saved Mark.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MATTERS began to go with wonderful rapidity. I worked very hard, and on Sundays and Thursdays I saw Marie.

My darling was always the same to me. She urged me on, and I worked for her and for France. "Get the scholarship at the Ecole Militaire," she said; and the boys said, "This young Schneider is *fiancé*." I was treated with great respect.

On Thursday and on Sunday I used to take her away as far as St. Privat, Malmaison, or Amandvilliers. We would sit in the woods alone, and watch the great cathedral, like a ship among a sea of woods, but a ship which never sailed.

Once I asked the good sisters if she might go to Luxemburg with me. They asked the bishop, and the bishop, to our great delight, said, "Yes, we might go." We French, do you know, are more free and innocent in our manners than you English.

That was a delightful journey. I took her first-class by Thionville and Bettemburg right into Luxemburg. Well, what we said by the way is just no matter at all. She went to her own people on the glacis, and I put a cigar in my mouth in the evening, and went into the town through the trees, meaning to go to the Café de l'Europe.

Well, you will conceive my surprise. There were no sentinels, and, going in by the north gate, it seemed to me that the place had undergone bombardment. The scarp was down, and was half filling up the ditch. I could not in the least understand matters. I looked round for a Prussian sentry, and I only saw a nice-looking young man in a grey uniform. I exercised myself. I spoke to that young man. His instincts were extremely French.

"What has happened here?" I asked.

"Do you not know, then?"

"In France we know nothing: at our Lycée newspapers are forbidden, unless they contain false news. For me, I have been working so hard at mathematics, fortification, and love-making, that I know nothing at all."

The Luxemburger whistled. "Then you do not know that the Prussians are gone?"

"This is the first word I ever heard of it," I replied, and passed on.

At the Café de l'Europe I heard everything. Napoleon III. had tried to buy Luxemburg from the Dutch. The Prussians had defied him to take it. Both parties had withdrawn their claims. France was livid with suppressed anger, and Prussia was red with wrath. Boy as I was, I saw that it must come now; but, boy as I was, I believed that we should win. No one anticipated our ruin. I most certainly did not, and thought my father a fool. Remember that the wise Germans cut down the trees on the glacis of Cologne, believing that they could not stop us short of that place.

Who was to blame? Well, the losing nation. He who breaks pays. But if Niel had lived, things might have been very different. We pay for everything, we French. At a cost of about six hundred millions sterling, we have just proved to the world that a *levée en masse* is no use whatever now, and that all the old Republican traditions are pure balderdash. Why, von der Tann had no more than fourteen thousand men before Orleans. Look at Gambetta; if ever a man raised a nation, he did so. Look at the result.

I did not in the least degree like the withdrawal of the Prussians from Luxemburg. It seemed to me to be a very ugly move at chess. I was saying so openly at the Café de l'Europe (where every one is French), when I looked up and saw my father and mother.

I went to him at once. "I am not dissipating, sir," I said.

"I know that," he answered. "Your mother and I have kept you well in sight. I am going to say something very strange to you. Come with me and your mother into the next room."

I rose and followed them.

"Valentin," said my father, "you have been a good boy to us, and we love you very dearly."

I remember the trifling blush which came on my face as I answered, "I have done my best, sir."

My father went on. "You do not know what has happened to you, I suppose?"

I said, "No."

"What did you think of your papers at the Ecole Militaire at Metz?"

"I thought them very bad, sir."

"You have gained the first scholarship, which carries a commission, and also the sword of honour for mathematics."

The room seemed to reel round with me. I had worked so very hard, but I had never expected anything like that.

My father went on, "I am glad that my son is a worthy boy, but I think I would have been more glad had he been on the other side. However, my dear, we will not quarrel on that point. You will have the red breeches on in a week, and I hope you won't die in them, for I love you. Boy, I want to tell you something more. Let me feel your pulse. That is right," he said.

"Valentin, will you obey me?"

"Yes, sir, to the death."

"Valentin, will you be married to-morrow?"

"Only to one girl, sir."

"I know. Are you prepared for that?"

I will tell you why I was silent. No, I cannot tell you why I was silent. My joy was so unutterable that I remained silent. Put it that way. I knew no more about marriage than the man in the moon. I only knew that, if the priest said certain words, I could call her my own for ever. I said, "Yes."

"I want you to be married to-morrow," said my father. "Monseigneur will manage the matter before ten; the train for Metz starts at a quarter past two. You will not see anything of your bride for a year or so. She will live at Fond de Givonne with us."

Monseigneur performed the ceremony; but I am sorry to say that I missed my train, and never got to Metz until late the next day.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THEN I put on the red breeches, and I should very much like to write an essay on red breeches, only the Editor says he won't stand any nonsense. The Editor is wrong in this matter; he is more than wrong, he is insular. The best thing which you

English have produced since Shakespeare is "Sartor Resartus," all about clothes. I propose an essay on red breeches to the Editor, and he says no. However, the loss is his, not mine. He does not see that the red breeches which he laughed at under the empire were the same which lay strewn in heaps at Sedan and St. Privat. Yet he is right again. Laugh and forget.

Well, the red breeches are not disgraced so far. Why, even those miserable Communists fought very well. They gave us terrible trouble, I can tell you. They fought with the halter round their necks; but in all countries, I can tell you, a man with a halter round his neck does not of necessity fight well. These miserable dogs, on the other hand, fought very well. I am not going so far with you as the Rue St. Honoré, that I beg of you to understand. But I can tell you that it was only by superior discipline that we won. You see, as regards us, *la ligne*, the Emperor had our *consecutive time*. Do you understand? We had been three years at it; they had not been three months. I doubt for my own part whether one single Communist regiment could have marched by subdivisions round its centre; yet they fought well.

So I take you to Metz. Well, I take you to Metz in one way, but not in another. I cannot tell you all about Metz; it was very ill and bad. No nation could go on long with such a garrison town as that. I could tell you things about Metz which would horrify and disgust you. Things were going on in Metz which have never gone on in England. English and German officers have told me that places which existed in Metz were unknown elsewhere. An English officer from Bengal told me that the Nautch of India was not so bad as things he saw at Metz; I should think it could not be worse. Young Delfroy took me to one of those places. I looked on for one instant, and then I struck him in the mouth. I knew that we must fight on the morrow, but I did not care. He had not insulted me, he had insulted Marie.

His man came to me that night. Alphonse le Roy had made me go to bed, because he said that you must sleep well before a duel. He was sitting on my bed, and we were arranging all about the duel, when Lieutenant d'Aurillac came in and sat on the bed also.

"My man is in bed, too," he said. "What time do you propose, Le Roy?"

"After parade, I suppose," said Le Roy.

"That will suit me exactly," I said; "for I must write to my wife and tell her that I have struck a Frenchman."

They stared at me with astonishment for a moment ; but before they had time to speak they stared more. I started up in bed, and they looked round.

Standing behind them was an old, strongly built man, very square in features, and of tremendous physical power. I was very much startled, because I had never seen such a man before, and his look was, though stern, one of intense pity.

D'Aurillac and Le Roy rose at once, and Le Roy said, "General Changarnier."

So I had seen him at last, the glorious old Republican hero, and with a smile upon his face. I would have kissed his feet, but he spoke sternly to me.

"Valentin Schneider, you are contemplating a duel to-morrow?"

"Yes, my General ; I have struck a French officer."

"A good excuse. Do you think nothing of your wife, then?"

"They do not know here that I am married."

"That is no answer. D'Aurillac and Le Roy, did you know that he was married?"

"Married!" said D'Aurillac; "why, he is a child."

"A child in innocence, a man in position. Delfroy, come in."

Delfroy came in. "I have come to apologise," he said. "How could I guess?"

I told him not to say one word more, on his life.

General Changarnier said, "We must have no duels, my boys. There will be duel enough soon to suit all of you. Listen to me. Respect that lad Schneider's innocence and purity. I am mistaken if he will be in the rear on the day of judgment for the sins of France."

Said Le Roy, "Name that day, General."

And General Changarnier paused a moment, and then he wrote a word on a piece of paper, and put it in an envelope.

"You, Le Roy, are of the Engineers. Well, I trust this to you for one year. After that, open it and read it."

A year afterwards we did so. Only one word was written, and that was—

"Briey."

How near he was being right! No one ever heard about that marvellous little town before the late Versailles courts-martial. The dear little place was absolutely untouched; and a war correspondent tells me that they made a little heaven of it while the guns at St. Privat, six miles off, were roaring like Vesuvius. Now, forsooth, the Versaillists say about our glorious Bazaine that he should have made another attempt to get to Briey after Gravelotte. Whither was he to have gone afterwards? And

with 200,000 men hanging on his flanks. Did Changarnier know nothing? Say Bazaine was a fool; you will hardly go as far as to say that Changarnier was one. I think that even you will hardly go as far as that. The defence of Metz was as well done as it could be done. I have more to say on that point, perhaps enough to fill the whole of this volume ten times over; but the Editor is the most inexorable. It remains, however, that General Changarnier stopped my first duel for me.

I have noticed a tender gentle sentiment about my countrymen which, you will forgive my saying so, I have not noticed in yours. It got about, in that *enfer* on earth, Metz, that I, though only a boy, was married. From the time when General Changarnier stopped that duel, I never heard one word uttered willingly before me which Marie herself might not have heard. Our people like romance, and here was a little romance for them, illustrated, if I may be allowed a *calembourg*, with cuts by General Changarnier—cuts at the state of military morality at Metz.

I must tell you that I was kept at headquarters there for a whole year, working hard at my profession, without any communication, save by letter, with wife, father, mother, or any of my old friends. I worked like a horse; I gained my grade as lieutenant, and then I wrote to my father, asking if I might come and see my bride. The answer was in one word—

"No." But there was more than that in the letter. He said, "Niel, Trochu, and Vinoy are coming your way next week. You must be there."

How on earth did he know this? I thought; and I went to General Changarnier. I told the dear old man everything, and I asked him whether I was justified in obeying my father under such circumstances. I was married, I said, and I wanted to see my own wife.

"I think," said the General, "that you had much better obey your father. How old are you?"

"Nineteen, General."

"Pretty boy; and you love one another still?"

"I would die for her, and she for me."

"Ah! Well, take an old man's advice. How long was I separated from my darling? Between four and five years at one time. Surely you, Valentin, with a pure love and high hopes, can for her sake bear the separation of a year. Is this a time for a Frenchman to talk about love-making?" he continued passionately. "No. Obey your father."

I did so to a limited extent.

At six o'clock the next morning the drums and horns announced

the arrival of Niel, Trochu, and Vinoy. The guard turned out all right, and the regiment was ordered for parade at eight.

I was not officer of the guard, and was making myself spruce for parade, when the officer of the guard rushed into my quarters, cast his shako on the ground, and said,

"We are all ruined."

"Why so?"

"The Colonel has got a terrible hæmorrhage from that wound which he got in the Crimea. The Adjutant can't move on his bed. You, as junior lieutenant, must act as adjutant. Have you got a pistol?"

"Yes; why?"

"Lend it to me, and let me blow my brains out."

"Bah!" I said; "we will get through it quite right."

In fact, the men turned out nobly. Our Colonel was one of the best of men and of martinets. The Adjutant was not what he might have been; but the Colonel had got the machine in such perfect order, that it would *go*. I had really very little to do. Parade is so absolutely perfect in French regiments, that I rather wondered at an inspection by three such very famous generals. There was really no inspection at all.

I was called up and I saluted.

"Give me the numbers of your companies, sir," said Marshal Niel, "from your books."

I did so. I was ready enough at that.

"First company 188, rank and file, and——"

"Never mind the officers, sir," said Vinoy; "there are always plenty of them. Number them," he said to me.

I did so; there were 67 all told.

"How many in hospital?" said Trochu.

I looked at my hospital book; there were 19.

"Number your second company, sir," said Niel.

I did so. The nominal number was 168, and the actual men present were 68.

I had done my duty, and I heard what Niel said. He said,

"This regiment, nominally 1800 strong, has not 900 men in it. And Gambetta abuses me because I want to make France strong."

At this moment an orderly rode up and said to Marshal Niel, "Colonel Delafont is dead, sir."

"Another of the old school gone, Vinoy. I suppose that wound in the thigh killed him?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall be the next," said Niel. "Young gentleman," to me,

"you have done your work very well. Tell General Changarnier, who suffers from some strange epidemic whenever I come near him, that you are a good boy. I will take your name, for you seem a good officer, you are not *toujours en café*, I'll be bound ; but you are very young, you are a mere boy. Take an old soldier's advice—leave the French army, and get married when you are old enough."

"I have been married already over a year, Marshal. And, as for the French army, I intend to die in it."

That was the last of Marshal Niel. Had he lived there would have been no Sedan. He was the first to find out that our battalions existed only on paper.

The Emperor believed in them, and dashed on Prussia. But the real destroyers of France were the Radicals in the Assembly, who so persistently opposed Marshal Niel.

I should like to tell off the English army as I did my regiment. Von der Tann had 14,000 men before Orleans, and 14,000 only. *But then they were all on the spot.* It is so with German armies. But it seems to me, with regard to English and French regiments, that, for some unexplained reason, at least one-third of the nominal force is either somewhere else, or does not exist at all.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

You know perfectly well, if you are a soldier, that your father can forbid you to come home ; while, on the other hand, your commanding officer may give you leave to *go* home, and, in point of fact, will *order* you to go home, and save hospital expenses if there is anything the matter with you, and if your home is near. I told Colonel Barbot that I was ill, and wanted to go home, but that my father had forbidden me to do so. He at once took out a large book, rang the bell for the doctor, and then tapped the table with his forefinger while he was waiting for the doctor's arrival. We were very precise in those times—some say too precise ; but if precision of a certain kind would have saved Sedan, we most certainly should have saved it. When I was a prisoner, I found that the Germans were more precise than ourselves, confound them ! In Mark's petit livret which I took from him, he was credited with *one sock*. He seems to have lost the other before it was paid for. How on earth a man can have a

bill, even a washerwoman's bill, sent in to him for "one sock," I cannot understand at all. Still we were very precise.

Colonel Barbot would not in any way speak to me until the doctor came. I remarked to him that the weather seemed likely to be fine. He replied that the weather was no business of a lieutenant's: it was the care of the Marshal of France.

He sat drumming on the table and smoking, until the doctor came. Dr. Bouche we always called him, though his name was Chateaurouge. He knew my complaint as well as he knew my story. The colonel knew both things perfectly well; but we were at that time the most precise army in the world.

"This young gentleman says he is ill, and wants furlough," says the colonel. "Will you give me your opinion?"

Our dear doctor was as precise as any one. He made me take off my shirt before the colonel, and put his ear to my chest.

"Precordial anxiety acting on the heart," he said, and I put on my shirt again, while the colonel wrote it down.

"What do you recommend?" said the colonel, and he wrote that down also.

"I should recommend a slight furlough—say, four weeks," said the doctor.

"Well, that is granted," said the colonel (who wrote that down also, and made the doctor and me sign it). "I have great pleasure in granting furlough to Lieutenant Schneider, because he is one of the finest young men I have, and yet I regret extremely that I shall miss his services. It is evidently necessary that he should retire for a month: and while we are at it, doctor, I want you to examine me, for I am in extremely poor health."

French discipline will not always stand fire. Both the doctor and I burst into laughter. I do not know which was the most absurd part of the farce which followed—the utter impudence of that claim on the part of Colonel Barbot (eighteen stone of Brittany, with never an ache in his body save from Algerian and Crimean wounds), or the cool way in which he slipped off his shirt, and requested the doctor to examine his heart.

Yet it was not a thing to laugh at in any way. He was sixty-one years of age, and those massive steel-clothed ribs had borne themselves well from Leipsic to Inkerman. The doctor stethoscoped him, and I saw while he was stripped that his body was scarred and seamed in every direction.

I said, "My colonel, may I look at your wounds?"

"Yes, boy."

I laid my hand on his fore-arm, cut in every direction, with white livid whales across and across. I never saw such an arm,

save that of your own Jones, V.C., who put it to himself that he must save one of his own privates, and did so. I said to Colonel Barbot—

“What is this?”

He said—

“Dresden, when I was a child like yourself. I was a drummer-boy.”

One long livid cut went across his breast; I put my finger on it, and looked into his face.

“Passage of the Beresina,” he said. “The present Madame Barbot was old enough then to be vivandière, and I to be in love with her. By heavens! boy, they were close on us there. I was close to her all through that, and the Cossacks thought she was a boy, and cut her over the shoulder. In the *mêlée*, before we got over the bridge, I got that cut over the breast. I got my revenge at Inkerman.”

“And this wound, sir?” I said, putting my hand on his hip.

“Alma,” he said, brightly. (You English will never say “Alma” in the proper way.)

And then the doctor came in on us, and he said,

“I find that you, like Lieutenant Schneider, are suffering from precordial anxiety. I consider that you had better go to Madame Barbot at Carignano for at least a fortnight. You, M. Schneider, must go to Sedan for at least a month.”

“How he orders us about, this one!” said the colonel savagely.

“We might as well be the mud under his feet. An English sergeant-major and a French doctor command their regiments.”

“Well, I can only say,” said the doctor, coolly, “that you are both suffering from the same complaint, and if you wish to appeal against my decision, you had better sign the form now, and have done with it.”

“I shall go,” said the colonel.

“I suppose that I had better go also,” I said.

I wrote and told my father that the doctor had ordered me home on a month's furlough. He was very angry, I fear. The diligence was late, and then I had to walk; so when I came to my father's house, I found no one to receive me, except Marie, no supper save what she gave me, and no bed for me to be in save hers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

I AM professedly writing for boys, and I would not write one word which would bring a blush on a boy's face : yet I will say this, that one day in a good boy's life he will have an announcement made to him by one of the other sex, dearer than father or mother, which will make his face crimson with unutterable joy.

She will not say many words, my boy, but you will understand them ; and then woe betide the man who lays hands on her or on you. You may talk about meeting a bear deprived of her cubs ; I dare say that is dangerous. For my own part, I never killed but one bear, and there was a violent dispute as to who had killed him. He knocked me head over heels, and I rammed my knife into him ; but, being a male bear, I do not think that he cared much for his cubs. But I would sooner meet a hundred she-bears without a cub among them, than one young gentleman to whom a girl has said the three words in French or the four in English.

And the whole thing is so perfectly pure, that the ultramontane priests dare say nothing about it. They sprinkle the child with holy water, and I hope that it does the child good. They have dared much those ultramontanes, but they have never dared to put a young father against a young wife at first. They are wise.

I ramble in my speech like a real Frenchman. Thiers and Gambetta, they never ramble, of course. Nothing has been wrong in France save the Prussians and the latter empire, according to them. Well, I can hardly agree with them. An English gentleman whom I know well told me, that the prurient and stupid talk among English schoolboys was as bad as bad could be. Of course, being both gentlemen, and grown up, we were unable to compare notes, and let the loathsome business alone. I can only say that, if your English schools are as bad as our French schools, they had better be broken up. There are one hundred and fifty things which boys may talk about ; why on earth do they choose to talk about the one hundred and fifty-first ?

Well, I know what you are (I correct myself, *you* are a gentleman). I know what an ordinary boy says about a certain kind of talk. I say to that ordinary boy that I have no argument, only advice. When a boy begins that nonsense, hit him immediately in the eye. You will soon stop it.

You have no right to listen to anything which your sister might not hear. What would you do to a boy who made a blackguard of himself before your sister ? Your sister is as sacred to

you as your wife. What would be done in France to a man who insulted his own wife ?

Well, the three French words did not come to me for a long time. I worked very patiently, and I found out many things. One thing was that our army was kept entirely in the dark about affairs—nay, about all things ; and the other thing was, that Trochu reported me as a very smart young officer. I consequently was moved from pillar to post. I passed for the staff, and then I was at Belfort, at Toul, at Châlons, everywhere but at Sedan. So a year passed, and Niel died. With him, France.

Niel had been dead a long time, it seemed to me, when I had to go to Châlons from Stenay. I rode like the—your patron saint the Dickens—and I met a rather old general on the outside of the line with a boy beside him, both on horseback.

I saluted, and would have ridden past, when D'Aurelles de Paladine, who was with this rather old General, called to me, "Halt, démontez et découvrez."

Then I saw the EMPEROR.

I made every earthly or unearthly apology to him, but he only laughed. To my unutterable astonishment, he said,

"You are young Schneider of Sedan ?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Your father has gone on the other side," said the Emperor. "I think that a pity ; but he knows his own business best. You are, however, entirely French ; at least so he tells me."

Here I must break off to inform you that none of us know what the connection between my father and the Emperor was. My wife said that it dated from London in 1867, but we none of us know at all.

"I am entire French at heart, your Majesty. I would blow my brains out at this moment for France."

"Yes ! But we will postpone the immolation for a few weeks. I have something to say to you. You, are, I think, connected with the Carbonari in the Ardennes ?"

The Tempter suggested a large "Yes," and a very large "No" ; but my good angel suggested a very large "Yes," and I uttered it.

"After that 'yes,'" said the Emperor, "I can see that I can get no information from you at all. We want unbribable men, and we have got one in you. I wish to do something for you."

The Prince Imperial here rather interfered with matters by getting off his horse, and whispering to me,

"Give me your geraniums."

I, of course, did so.

"Now you can pin on your cross," said the Prince Imperial.

The next moment the Emperor gave me the cross of the Legion of Honour of the third class. Ha! you English may laugh at it if you like, but which among you has got it? I was bought that day.

The Emperor said, "I wish to ask you to speak to a young man, a sergeant, who knows you."

I bowed.

A *chasseur à pied* came before me. I looked on his face for one moment, and then I fell on his neck and he on mine, in the French manner.

It was Mark.

Another *chasseur à pied* came up, and it was Jacques Cartier.

"You see that I know some of your treasons, Schneider," said the Emperor. "I know all about Mère Mathilde also. Come away with me.

I went dismounted, and talked to him as he sat on his horse. Old Pelissier said, "S'il monte au cheval nous sommes perdus." He was on horseback now. Pity that such a grand fellow was so befooled by a third-rate woman.

"I could guillotine your two friends," he said.

"Without doubt, sire, and me with them."

"But you are not of the International."

"Me! I am an Orleanist."

"That is a comfort. Boy, your two friends know every path through the Ardennes."

"Yes; but, sire, the Germans know them better."

"Can you go to the extreme south—to Esch?"

"Of course; but I would rather be nearer Libramont."

"I would sooner you went to Esch."

"I am under orders, sire. Must I go to Esch at once?"

"No. Do you want furlough for a fortnight?"

"Sire," I said, "I have been married more than two years, and I have not seen my own wife more than a month. A man could do no more for France than that."

"Nothing will do anything for France," said the Emperor.

"We'll see. Where is your wife, boy? You shall go to her, but only for a fortnight. Where is she?"

I answered, "Sire, at Sedan."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THAT glorious stormy petrel Bourbaki came down on us one morning, and I heard him say to Colonel Barbot, "Hein, hein, j'ai mes soupçons." Colonel Barbot declared that he had also his suspicions, but I had not the wildest idea what these suspicions were.

Bourbaki said, "You had better go to Strassburg, it seems to me; and Colonel Barbot said, "I suppose so;" and added, "Will they break in on us by Colmar?"

"We shall be at Cologne by then," said Bourbaki; "we cannot fail to turn their left."

But all this, do you see, was Greek to me.

"Have you a smart officer?" said Bourbaki.

"No," said Colonel Barbot.

"Not one?"

"Not one. Stay, there is a boy from Sedan, Schneider by name, who is very clever," and he called me up.

"Monsieur," said Bourbaki, "I wish you to go to Strassburg."

"Sir," I said, "I think that the Emperor wished me to go to Esch."

"The child is right," said Barbot. "This child is married, and has been with his wife now twice. This child knows also the Ardennes, and is connected with the Carbonari."

"I beg your pardon, General, I am not connected with them," I said. "I am an Orleanist, and not a Revolutionist."

"It is the same thing," said Colonel Barbot. "But you know the passes of the Ardennes?"

"Yes."

"What are we to do with this child who is married?" said Barbot.

Bourbaki looked at me very keenly before he answered: then he said suddenly,

"Will you swear to die for France?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, then. Go to Luxemburg and examine the frontier."

"Yes, sir."

Here there was an interruption. We were talking in a small room at a place called Briey; we heard the clatter of swords on the stones. The door was thrown open, and Mademoiselle Sophie announced

"General Uhrich."

The defender of Strassburg—the hero of our age stood before me. A very gentleman, with moustaches slightly longer than the pattern of the Algerian officers. I said to myself, “I would go to the death after that man.”

Can you conceive the infernal villany of some of our nation? They seem to me to match those who shoot at the Queen in your nation. For my part, I say fairly that for rascality we can in France match the Fenians in England. I do not talk about the Communists: their minds were abused, and, moreover, they were excited; and when a Frenchman is excited he is not to be trusted. But I wish to point out this, that our glorious hero Urich has had to demand courts-martial for his defence of Strassburg.

France is getting rotten through Chauvinism; England has been rotten from the same cause long ago. Yet England shows signs of repentance; France none. The Prussians are going in for Chauvinism now. Their time is to come. The Americans went in for it from the first; but, as they are three thousand miles from any civilised country except Canada, and as they do not want Canada, and could not get Canada if they did, it does not particularly matter.

Urich spoke.

“I am going to Strassburg. Who is this pretty boy, then? Can he be trusted? I should like a boy to go with me to Strassburg. What sword is that you have, child?”

“Sword of honour for mathematics, my General,” I said.

“Good,” said Urich. “I want the route. Can you give it me?”

“Whither?” I asked, in a puzzle.

“To Metz first.”

I said, standing up before the dear old fellow, like a school-boy,

“Aubone, four kilomètres; St. Marie aux Chênes, five kilomètres; St. Privat, three kilomètres; Jercusalem, one kilomètre.”

Urich had got on his horse, but, to my surprise, he got off again. He said to Bourbaki,

“Can we trust this boy?”

Bourbaki said, “He is married.”

“All the better,” said Urich, “he will not lie. Boy, will you lie?”

“No, sir.”

“Can you go to the Emperor?”

“If I am sent, sir.”

Urich looked at me for a little time, and then he stroked his moustache.

“He is too young to be trusted,” he said, “with the fate of an empire.”

"I am a gentleman, and I can be trusted with anything."

"Shall we trust the boy?" said Uhrich.

"I think I would," said Bourbaki.

"Well, boy, go to the Emperor, and tell him this. If he respects the neutrality of Luxemburg, he is ruined."

That message was never delivered.

The streets at Briey are very steep, and I saw Uhrich ride down one of the steepest of them towards Strassburg, and I saw him no more. Bourbaki rode down another street, in the direction of Sedan.

I have never seen those men since, but I may be allowed to say that I conceived an affection for both of them which I think will last beyond death.

I stood in the street for a little time, and I smoked. I could see Uhrich on the other hill, and saw that he had got his route in a correct manner. Then I heard a horse's feet behind me, and I turned.

I knew my man at once. I had seen him before. It was the Crown Prince of Saxony.

Those Saxons have manners nearly equal to those of the French or the English aristocracy. The Crown Prince said,

"I beg a thousand pardons for troubling you, monsieur, but can you tell me where I shall find General Uhrich and General Bourbaki?"

I said that they were both gone away.

"I regret it," said the Crown Prince of Saxony. "I must ride far and fast to-night. I must go to Luxemburg."

It struck me that I would go also. I proposed it to the Crown Prince, and he was very much pleased with the idea. As a staff-officer I had no difficulty with Colonel Barbot, and so the Crown Prince and I trotted off very comfortably through Audun la Romain, Audun la Tige, to Esch.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"A PLEASANT country, M. Schneider," said the Crown Prince of Saxony. "I am sorry that you ever got it from us."

"We should be loth to give it back, sire," I said.

"And yet you want the Prussian Rhine provinces?"

"I do not; they are emphatically German."

"And are these provinces so very emphatically French, then?"

"Speak to the first peasant you meet here, and see if he can speak German."

"Not here at Audun la Romain, but twenty miles off, in Alsace and Lorraine. What do you say?"

"They can certainly speak German there."

"And cannot speak French."

The argument was not prolonged. We were at Audun la Romain, in front of the little auberge, when the deadly news came. I knew nothing of what had happened. No one in France knew much in those times.

A gentleman rode up to the Crown Prince, and put a newspaper into his hand, pointing out a certain paragraph. He read it very carefully, and then uttered an oath. He was turning to ride away, when he seemed to remember that he had not taken leave of me. He turned very swiftly, and bowed, and the paper fell from his pocket. I was bowing to him, and I did not notice it until he had ridden away. Then I saw it, and went and picked it up. I was thinking of riding after him, but he was over the farther hillside. I looked at it. It was the *Indépendance Belge*.

What could be in it? What could have disturbed the Crown Prince, so as nearly to make him forget his manners? Had he been a Prussian, any breach of manners would have been quite accounted for; but a Saxon! you might as well have expected a breach of manners from a Frenchman or a Tyrolese. There was something in the paper, and after all it was a public newspaper, and I looked at it. I was not long in discovering what it was. I stood before the auberge at Audun la Romain, with my bridle on my arm.

I uttered a loud exclamation. The landlord asked me what was the matter.

"Have you money hoarded here?" I said.

He looked at me sily, and nodded his head.

"Move it—hide it—bury it," I said.

"But," said he, "I am going to buy Père Thomas's orchard."

"Do not," I said, "you will get it cheaper in two years."

"Ho!" he said, "M. le Lieutenant, then it is war."

"That is more that I can say, but mind your money."

"Hein, hein! but this is a sad disappointment. I have set my eyes on that orchard for ten years; but even if it came to the worst we should seize Trèves and Cologne."

Of course I could say nothing else. My duty as an officer prevented me. I rode away towards Sedan, hardly knowing what I did.

Had this aubergiste lived twenty or five-and-twenty miles farther from the frontier, he would probably have scorned my advice ; as it was, he, as I afterwards found out, took it. When the Saxons came that way he was found to be possessed of an admirable temper, two dozen of wine, eight bottles of atrocious brandy, and nine francs, all of which he formally delivered over to the Maire of Audun when the requisition came, and got a receipt from the Government of the 4th of September. After the peace, he opened his cellars, bought the orchard, drove a roaring trade with the Germans, who swear by him, and has made rather a good thing of it than otherwise.

What were the words which I read in the *Indépendance Belge*, which made me turn my horse's head towards Sedan, and say,

" Which of them is mad ? "

The words were very few. " The Emperor sends an ultimatum, demanding that the King of Prussia should guarantee that the name of the Prince of Hohenzollern should never be mentioned again for the candidature to the crown of Spain."

It was a declaration of war. I saw it at once. No nation could stand that and exist. It was possibly the most awful act of arrogance since the paper blockade of the British ports by the first Napoleon. For the gentleman who thus committed political suicide I am extremely sorry. His position was a very difficult one. Now, in his misfortune, I choose to forget everything—his awful perjury, his terrible extravagance, and, lastly, his insensate folly. I choose to forget them ; I can speak no more of them. I held his commission once. I swore to be faithful to the French Empire, and I was as long as it lasted. Then I joined the Government of the 4th of September. Rossel, my poor mad friend, did not, and was shot. There is not a single military officer in France who has not violated his *sacramentum militare*.

I am Orleanist now. France has among her sons a bevy of princes, such as the world has seldom seen. Few can compare with them either for virtue or talent. Suppose she selects one of them. Why, then I must once more change my vows ; but, an Orleanist once on the throne, I change my vow for the last time, and there are many others who would do the same.

I rode to Fond de Givonne to see my father and give him the news. I rang at the bell, and after a time that horrible old witch, Mère Mathilde, opened the door.

" What do you do here ? " I said.

" I keep the house."

" Where is my father ? "

" At Cologne, and your mother too. Here is a letter for you."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE letter from my father said in effect, "We have your bride. Do your duty by France. If you are killed, you will need no money yourself; I will leave some for your wife. If you live, you are my own good son, and shall share all, on one solitary condition—that you burn this letter at once. You must know that we shall lose Alsace and part of Lorraine for a time, and I do not choose to sacrifice my property; in fact, decline to do so. The Emperor is totally misguided by his wife and by his generals. I have sources of information which you cannot have, and I tell you that we are beaten before a blow has been struck. The Germans do not know it, but I do. The Germans to a man believe that we shall at least have Cologne. I dare say no more."

I never knew whence my father got his intelligence; but I had such faith in him that I believed in a very great disaster, yet it was not certain that war was declared. I gave a look at the old garden and at the old house, and then I got on my horse and rode away.

"Ho!" croaked Mère Mathilde after me; "there are yet two other letters."

"Why did you not give them, then?"

"Ha! who knows? I think I wanted to plague you. So Marie is not good enough for you, eh?"

I said, "You are a fool," and took the letters. They were serious enough. One was from Mark, a very difficult one to make out; but it ran like this:—

"Well-beloved,—The Prince will come through the Eifel. The Prussians do not at this moment know whether the Southern States will go with them. If they do, we are gone. We are told off at 1,200 men, and we shall not fight above 500.

"MARK."

The other letter was from Jacques Cartier:—

"Dear,—Mind this. Our chance is against Falkenstein. Tell your General so. The old dog is of the Blücher school, and will commit endless blunders. *Our people know him very well indeed.* Now, in conclusion, try to use your influence to keep our officers out of the cafés. This is a serious and sad business. The others

are not ready ; but they are getting ready, and they will be three to one on us with an inferior population. Our people say that they will win in a canter, though I hardly believe that. Son of my heart, I want to tell you this. The English won at Trafalgar against great odds. Why should not we ? I talked to an old English sailor once, and asked how they won. He said, because *they kept on firing after the others had left off*. Keep your men together, and continue the fire, even when hope seems lost. Don't, if you can help it, dash at the Prussians and cross bayonets ; it is a great mistake. Stand as the English stand, but do no more. Dashing at an enemy is all nonsense ; our men are not physically strong, and are never well trained. *Elan* is our ruin. We go to pieces if we fail ; and it is difficult to rally a French regiment.

“JACQUES CARTIER.”

I wondered very much where Jacques Cartier had got this accession of wisdom. In fact, it was not his at all ; it was that of General Robinski, a Pole. Robinski was only a major in the French army ; but he was a general in nearly every other, including that of the Confederate States of North America. To write his life would be to write another story as long as this ; but I may say of him that, though he sold his sword, he was true to two countries above all others—Poland, the land of his birth, and France, the land of his adoption.

Robinski, poor fellow, had a tendency for an idea, greater than that of nationality ; he believed in something which he called the “Universal Republic.” Naturally he was a great friend of my peculiarly discreet friends, Jacques Cartier and Mark, my brother. Naturally, also, when everything went wrong with us, he joined the Commune. Naturally, also, when he was taken with Rossel, he sent to me to give evidence to his character. I asked Lord Orley, who was in Paris distributing *les dons des Anglais*, why. He said, probably because I was the greatest fool he knew. He is a droll, Lord Orley, and I gave him a *coup de poing* in fun. I gave evidence to Robinski's character, about which I did not happen to know much ; but I said nothing about his being a Carbonaro and an Internationalist. Orley did much better for him. Orley stripped his sword-arm, and showed the cuts on it. They were eight ; “They would have been twenty,” said Lord Orley, “had not the prisoner saved my life at Inkerman.”

Said the President, a Royalist, “You do injustice to your order, milord, in speaking for a traitor and a Communist.”

“I should be unworthy to belong to that order, M. le Président,

if I was capable of deserting a comrade in distress," said Lord Orley.

There was that curious movement in the room which we French call "sensation." For a moment I thought that Robinski was saved. Let me go on, please; it is a very short episode.

There was too much known about the man, it seemed. I knew more than I chose to tell; but others, the detective police, knew more, and told it secretly. The poor fellow had got Revolution on the brain, and the French are pretty good judges of *that* malady. Under the Commune he had done no more harm than Rossel; but when the court-martial came back they were unanimous.

"A la mort."

It was a very wet morning, and very cold. When he was put up at the post, Lord Orley, the priest, and myself went up to him. He had finished his religion; so the priest simply gave him the benediction, and he spoke to me.

"There is a cross round my neck, Schneider," he said; "take it off when I am down, and give it to your friend Mark. He was one of us."

Mark had been under the turf many a long day, but I said nothing.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE officer of the firing party ordered us away. He knew the priest, Lord Orley, and myself, and we removed. Robinski never staggered for a moment when the volley came; he fell on the back of his head. We feared while the utter horror of the *coup de grâce* went on with the other two, but our man was killed outright.

The officer of the firing party came up as we were rifling him. Round his neck were two gold chains—one with a cross, one with a locket containing the portrait of a not very handsome woman. The officer said,

"He loved some one once."

I turned on the officer, and said, "He loved France always; he never betrayed France."

"I think so," said the officer. "M. Schneider, you are a man of mark, but you know the Carbonari."

"Well?"

"Was he one?"

"I think so, but I cannot quite say. I got in an indirect manner information from him at one time, which, had it been listened to, might have saved France.

"We know that by your position," said the officer. "Gentlemen, will you come and look at Rossel?"

I did not go, but left the whole of the ghastly tragedy.

Lord Orley overtook me as we were going into Versailles, and he said,

"All this seems to me a mistake."

"It is a necessity," I said, "thrust on us by the Revolution of 1789, as your Fenian executions were thrust on you by the Irish Rebellion of 1798."

"That is true," he said; "but we only executed absolute murderers. It seems to me a pity that you should shoot such gallant soldiers as Robinski or Rossel, who would have fought for you."

"They would have given their heart's blood against a foreign enemy," I said; "but they would always plot against the state. No; you the most gentle of all nations (save the Americans) towards political escapades, should certainly not cast the first stone at us. You found it necessary to give a terrible example; we have found the same thing necessary. You have an amount of loyalty to the throne which we have never had, and yet you capitally punished many. I say nothing whatever of the Indian mutiny and its suppression. It was entirely necessary that suppression, and it was done. What, then, has an Englishman to say to us?"

"Well, I am shut up," said Lord Orley, and walked on in silence.

I do not in the least know what he meant by saying that he was "shut up." Shut up, as far as I understand English, means incarceration. Now, I will take my oath that that good milord walked with me to St. Cloud, and saw the ruins that very afternoon. He never was shut up at all, that man; he was always free to come and go, as Lloyd Lindsay or Dr. Russell. I conceive, however, that he used the expression in the *secunda intentio*, and meant that I had the best of the argument.

Heh, that *secunda intentio*: the Frère Chrétien who taught us our religion at Metz told us much about that figure as logic. I called it a "figure," and was put *en piquet* against the wall for half an hour. There I repented of my sins, by telling the Frère Chrétien that the Roman Catholic religion was formed on the

grounds of *secunda intentio*. I got four hours' piquet for saying that, and a frightful scolding from the President. But I hold my opinion to this day.

This is a catalogue of reminiscences ; but it has its purpose. Robinski gave information to Jacques Cartier, Jacques Cartier gave it to my father ; and I am rich instead of being poor. I must ask you to forgive me for laying a little immortelle on the grave of Robinski and Rossel, for I loved them both, with all their sins.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

I WOULD rather not write the next chapter ; but I must. I wish that Spicheren was blotted out from the face of the earth. They cry out about Sedan, but Sedan was only the end of our ruin ; Spicheren began it.

War was declared, as you know, and the deadly game began. It came on us very suddenly after all, though General Trochu tells me that it came equally suddenly on the Germans, and the German General von Lindenau tells me that they were totally unprepared. We in the army, left without information, believed that it was a war against Prussia alone. But we very soon heard that Saxony, Würtemberg, Baden, and the other states of the Bund were against us. We always believed that the oppressed states of the war of 1866 would be for us. But no ; that idea of a united Germany was in their hearts, as the idea of a united France is in ours.

We never believed that Bavaria, for instance, would have gone against us. Paris and Munich are the finest homes of art and music north of the Alps. We never dreamt that the people of Piloty, Kaulbach, and Wagner would have turned against us ; but they did. Their feeling of patriotism was too strong ; and *en revanche* for their going against Prussia, the doctrinaires of Berlin made the highly cultivated people of Dresden and Munich do all the dirty work. I appeal to Saxony and Bavaria if I am not right. And this thing was done by the nation which produced Humboldt and Bunsen. Well, the baseness of St. Sebastian was done by the nation which produced Wilberforce ; and once more, the affair of the September massacres was done by the nation which produced Chateaubriand ; so that it seems to me that it is only pot and kettle after all.

For my part, I was now nominated to the staff of General Florie des Anges (that is not his name, but he must bear it). My business was to ride furiously about with written messages. I should have liked to have known what was in the envelopes, but I never did. The delivery of them produced generally a sudden disaster. I noticed this during the whole campaign. I am anticipating again when I say that General Florie des Anges was extremely *dévo*t, and was supposed to be a relation of the Empress.

Now for a month, or it seems to me twenty years, I was utterly dissociated from wife, father, mother, and everything I had ever loved. I rode about three thousand miles, and no one knew me when I turned up again. At least, I am a little wrong there. I said no one. But then your wife is no one, you know. She is everybody.

I may fairly say from what I had heard and from what I saw, I suspected that we should get a reverse or two, and should have to raise France against Germany, and beat her into submission (a matter which Gambetta tried too late). But I was not prepared for Spicheren. It took me utterly by surprise; *our men did not stand*.

A great deal has been said about Spicheren. Vogel von Falkenstein was suspended from command at once for doing nearly the finest deed of arms ever done in the world, and most properly. The chances were fifty to one against him. In Prussia, as in England, you shoot or suspend a general officer *pour encourager les autres*. I can quite understand the extreme anger of von Moltke and his school against Vogel von Falkenstein; yet he won. Why? Because the old mastiff knew that the regiments before him would not stand.

I did not know that. When I saw the steel blue battalions coming up at us, I thought that the man was mad. They wound in and out among the vineyard walls, and we fired at them (I was a mere spectator you must remember). Our men fired very well, and with great accuracy, but still this horrible blue snake came winding on. We scotched it in places, but it was never killed.

The rise of Spicheren is as steep as the roof of a house, and you could see the men coming on. On level ground, you know, you can only see the front rank of an opposing battalion. At Spicheren you could see thousand after thousand preparing for the assault should the first assault fail. I thank Heaven I was not frightened; but, then, young married men seldom are.

They fired very well. Their artillery did not support them so well as in later battles. I found myself with the back of my head against a wall, and somebody said that Lieutenant Schneider's

horse had been shot under him. Like David Copperfield, on a different occasion, I was prepared to deny the fact indignantly; but seeing that the horse *was* dead, and that I was bleeding all down my back, I began to believe that there was something in it.

The next minute our inexorable enemies were over the wall. Dazed and stunned as I was, I tried to do something. We had regiments who would have disputed every inch of ground, but these poor boys could not and would not stand. Do not laugh at them or despise them in any way. You English stand to the death better than any troops in the world. Yet do not even you speak of Chillianwallah to a certain dragoon regiment of yours.

CHAPTER XL.

I WISH to speak the truth, and I think I do so when I say that after Spicheren our men began to get frightened, and to distrust their officers. Of the other three lost battles the men knew nothing, until a pestilent rogue came in from Luxemburg with copies of the *Indépendance Belge*.

Of all the lunacies committed under the sun, the lunacy of the Emperor was the greatest. Fancy reading this: "Macmahon has lost a battle, *but there is no reason why matters should not recover themselves*." From that moment we were utterly lost. He had almost better have lied, and claim a victory.

We, like yourselves, have been so accustomed to victory, that we do not behave well under defeat. When your Wellington bore down on us from the lines of Torres Vedras, with the command of the sea at his back, we did not behave well. Napoleon the Great was elsewhere, and Wellington counted him for 80,000 men. We were always in doubt after the first four great battles; we began looking to the rear, and that is fatal in soldiering. I do not think that there was a coward among us, only we distrusted "head-quarters."

Forbach was the worst of all, but that I never saw. A staff-officer with whom I was lying told me that he had been there, and that the battle showed that our men would not stand against the Germans. I laughed at him. He told me to laugh, turned over on his side, and went to sleep.

I remember nothing save episodes during the weary days which followed before the frightful day of St. Privat. I was riding now

continually. I could make out nothing at all. I was a mere messenger. I had to put letters in my haversack, and carry them across country. Sometimes I had something to eat, sometimes I had nothing at all. My horse, which carried me long and well, was an English bay horse. I tried to find where they had buried him the other day, but I could not.

It is not so very safe, this carrying of despatches, I can tell you. You lose your way sometimes in the dark, and, if you are close to the frontier, you may violate neutrality. Now I was close on the Dutch frontier, and I completely lost my way in the dark one night ; that was before the passage of the Prince by Metz you will notice, or, to be more correct, it was the evening before the day on which Bazaine was doomed.

It grew very dark, and there was no moon ; my orders were for Longwy, and there were two blazing villages in a line which guided me past Metz. Then I got into a dark wood, and lost sight of them and of everything ; then I got on a broad blank down, and when I got to the summit of it I found that I had entirely lost my way.

There was a cluster of lights a long way off, which I made out to be Thionville. It could surely be no other place. The silence of death was all around me, and it was difficult to believe that a great battle had been fought and lost within sight of where I stood that day.*

The field of battle was above twenty miles away, and yet I felt that the gentle wind which was waving the long grass on the down, was also waving the dead men's hair who lay down yonder behind the lights of Thionville.† I do not think that I ever felt so sad and lonely in my whole life.

There was a little solitary pool of water on it, and I dismounted from my horse and watered him. Then I let the poor beast graze, and then I sat down and thought.

What was there to think about ? only disaster after disaster. The Prince might turn Metz, and the peasants had told me that the whole nation of Germany were on the march through Saarbruck and Colmar. Now I thought of our attenuated battalions, and I am afraid that I lay with my face on the short, dewless grass, and made a fool of myself.

I roused myself, and thought, "Where was I ?" I had eaten nothing since six in the morning, and my poor horse was failing.

* The author is only correctly putting down personal recollections.

† From this down you can see the cathedral at Metz, twenty miles away. I forget the name of it.

I mounted him again, and went down from the summit rather faint, but knowing, if you will look at the map, that I should be at Longwy long before the boldest Uhlan.

The down dipped steeply, and then I was on a country road. Then I suddenly found a stream before me, and a village beyond.

I was in great doubt. The village was in high festival, and I remembered that it was a great day among the Catholics, though I, as a Huguenot, could not for the life of me remember which. I was well in the shade, and I reconnoitred.

I saw a young man come out with a young woman under the eaves of a shed opposite. I knew what I was witnessing, for I had done the same thing myself before. He was asking her to have him, I knew that. She gave him one kiss, and went back to her mother. I was glad of this, and I was also glad that she told him not to come in again for a quarter of an hour, because I wanted this young man most particularly. He stood under the shed, there was no one near, and I said,

"Pst, pst."

"Qui vive?" he whispered.

"Is it France?" I asked.

"No, not here. Come over the stream, and you will find where you are."

He came at once, and looked at me.

"A French officer," he said. "My dear, if you come over the stream, you break the neutrality of Luxemburg."

"I must have wandered," I said.

"Yet come over. We are all mad for your side here."

"I cannot. I must go south to skirt the frontier."

"Where do you wish to go?" said the young man.

"To Longwy as fast as possible."

"Then see, dear officer, I can take you across Luxemburg by daylight. No one will be a bit the wiser in any way."

I hesitated. It was a fearfully immoral proceeding. I do not defend myself at all. Cast me out of the city, and stone me. But when he told me the name of the village, I saw that it was utterly hopeless to get to Longwy in time. I saw that I must do it. I crossed the stream with him, and stood in the territory of the King of Holland.

"Stay here under the shed," said the young man. "Were you watching me and my darling?"

"Yes; but it does not matter. I am a young married man myself.

"See, then, how it happens. She is going to have me. She is a French girl, and I would die for her or for France. It will

be exactly ten minutes before I get my horse. It is only half-past ten now; I will go to her for one moment, then I will be with you."

I stood for less than five minutes before I heard the sound of two pretty little feet which stopped near me. A gentle little voice said,

"Where is the French officer?"

I said,

"Here!"

Then two pretty little hands were clasped in mine. I knew they were pretty, though I never saw them. It was too dark. Then a little arm went round my neck, and I got a kiss on both cheeks. With the cleverness of my nation, I guessed that this was the young lady who was just engaged to my guide, and, with the tact of my nation, I did not return them, saying only,

"I will pay those back to my wife."

My guide Max came round the corner, leading his horse.

"I have been kissing the officer," said the young woman.

"You had better kiss me," said Max, good-humouredly, "I am handsomer than he is."

"Pas du tout," I said; "though we have never seen one another, I will match myself for beauty against you, and I am not handsome."

"Max is *very* handsome," said the young lady, and from sounds which I heard, I should think that he got a great deal more kissing than I did. "Save France, officer," said the young woman.

"I will die for her if I can, mademoiselle," I said. "She must save herself from herself."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE cabarets were open in that village. The people were sitting in the street looking at the weather; at M. le Curé; at Sister Agatha, who had come out to air herself after attending a man with a broken leg; at M. le Maire, and Madame his wife, and everything which was to be seen. Yet it is a most remarkable thing that not one of these gentle Luxemburgers saw me. If I caught an eye, there was naught but speculation in it.

I think that a French staff-officer, with a gold-hilted sword, red

breeches, a white cloak lined with scarlet, and patent leather boots to his knees, is rather an impressive person. But they did not see me at all. There are none so blind as those who will not see. I saluted M. le Maire; he looked me full in the face, and cut me dead. I understood the joke when an anonymous hand sent me the *Luxemburg Chronicle*. The Maire of this village was called to account for letting me pass. His answer was very good:—

"I can only say that several people were there in uniform. Ostensibly, Herr Dukeldorf, of the Grand Duke's army. I amused myself by watching the people swinging. I noticed very late at night a man in scarlet and white, whom I took to be an Englishman. Lord Granville having guaranteed our neutrality, I thought it indecorous to demand passports of an English officer, at a time when we were *en fête*."

The answer passed, as I heard afterwards. Meanwhile I went on with my guide into the darkness. He was most terribly French, this young fellow, and his curses against the Prussians were loud and deep. I reasoned with him.

"You continually abuse the Prussians. Why so?"

"They are disagreeable blackguards."

"They are better educated than we are; their domestic morals are excellent. We declared war, and they wanted to cripple us. Why are we to abuse them at all?"

"Did you know them at Luxemburg?"

"Many hearts were sore when they left it," I said.

"That is true," he answered, "yet they are most disagreeable. They have violated the sacred soil of France."

"No soil is sacred," I answered, "if it cannot be defended. I dislike the Prussians; their habits are by no means like our own, in some respects they are better. But you must remember that all the southern states have joined with them."

"Yes," said the Luxemburger, "the whole horde of barbarians is on France at once."

"Are the people of Munich and Dresden barbarians?" I asked.

"Are the gentle Bavarian-Tyrolese barbarians?"

He was silent, and came to the woman's argument, "I hate them all alike."

Then we had very quiet talk under the winking stars—very pleasant talk, which made me think of Marie, and his being as silly about his love as I was about mine. We rode very fast, and at one o'clock in the morning we came to a large village, which seemed to me to consist of very vast buildings, with a continual noise of water. He trotted up before me through a beautiful

garden, and I had no difficulty in seeing that I was in front of a splendid hotel, and that there were two other splendid hotels right and left of us. Still all was dark and silent.

"What place is this?" I asked.

"The Baths of Mondorf," he answered. "Keep out of the light when they open the door. Why, in the name of goodness, do you French dress like that?" and he rang the bell.

I whispered to him, "This is the extreme south point of your Dutch territory, I think."

"It is so. Ride under the shade, dear officer, and turn that white cloak of yours inside out. Unless I am mistaken, we are in extreme danger. Do you see that light on the hill close by?"

"Yes."

"What do you make of it?"

"A watch fire."

"Yes, and I fear German. Turn your cloak, and keep in the shade. If anything is wrong here, leave me to shift for myself. Strike straight up the village, take the first turning to the right, get among the lanes, and keep asking the way to Petange. Not a villager will betray you."

My chances of being shot for a spy seemed to me extremely prosperous. The only question was, how far had the Germans pushed?

My friend rang again. Now the door was thrown open on the darkness, and a voice said, "Who goes there, monsieur?"

Then there was a whispering, and my guide went in. Then he came out, and said, "It is all as it should be; we must rest here an hour. That fire on the hill is from burning weeds; there is no German within fifteen miles. We *must* rest, for we shall have to ride far and fast, and our horses will not stand it without rest."

"We are fearfully near the frontier," I said.

"The frontier is on the other side of the garden," he said.

I felt the necessity of rest. I passed in through a darkened hall into a brilliantly-lighted saloon, though no light had been visible from the outside, and to my unutterable astonishment I found four gentlemen playing at cards, and a beautiful young lady advising the youngest gentleman how to play.

The host, who had admitted me into this saloon was a tall, grey-headed man. He said in the most apologetic manner, "Messieurs les Anglais, will you allow a captain of the Duke of Luxemburg's guard to have his supper here?"

They rose and bowed. I saw by their eyes that they knew

everything, but they never said a word which could compromise me. A very tall man, with a carefully curled moustache, came forward and begged me to be seated. A shorter, stout-built man, with a brown beard and a bright eye, took the opportunity to sweep all the money and all the counters off the table, and put them into his own pocket. There was about four francs, as I guessed, and the thing was so openly and audaciously done that I could not help laughing. The tall man with the moustache saw from my laughing that something was wrong, turned at once, missed the money, and at once began a personal encounter on the youngest of the party, the man who had not taken it.

They were in no way heated with wine these two, but they pulled one another about, until the younger one slipped on the polished floor, and came down on the back of his head. Then an older gentleman (he was not much over thirty, evidently the brother of the younger combatant) picked his brother up; and then there was a general objurgation, which ended in the restoration of the four francs by the short, stout-built gentleman with the brown beard.

I thought, of course, that there would be at least two duels over the matter. I never saw men handle one another like that before. I only hoped that they would not ask me to interfere, and be a second to either of them. The youngest among them begged my pardon for *tapage* in most excellent French. Then I found that they were going to supper. They did not look like lunatics at all, though they behaved, as I should say, most disgracefully.

I took the opportunity to step out and ask the landlord who they were. He said, "Oh! they are only correspondents of the London press. The one with the brown beard is trying to get through the German lines into Metz. Here are their names in the visitors' book. They must start in two hours from now, they say."

I looked at the visitors' book, and then I looked at the landlord. I knew the names of three of these men very well indeed, for I had read much English lately; the fourth, the younger of the two brothers, I did not know, but as he had signed himself with V.C. after his name, I took occasion, before supper, to ask the tall man with the moustache, the correspondent of the —, who he was.

"He is the hero of Rajpootpoor, in the Mutiny. He was only seventeen then. He and his brother have come out, I suspect, officially; but I don't know, and I don't ask. I ask nothing which I do not want to know. I don't ask whether or no you are a French officer carrying despatches."

"Please do not."

"Of course I will not; but if you happened to meet such a person advise him to read his despatches, to burn them, and then to remember them; but before all things to get to Longwy."

"How far have the Germans got?" I asked, suddenly.

"I *can't* know. I shall know to-morrow afternoon, but that would be too late for you. Do you know a place called Petange?"

"I should, my brother was killed there."

"Was there ever a battle there?"

"No; he was killed by wolves in the snow years ago. I shall keep to the right of Mont St. Jean, and drop on to Longwy comfortably."

"Are you afraid of the Luxemburgers? I think they are getting frightened."

"I shall keep to the country lanes."

"Now come to supper, and after supper to bed, then a start," said the Englishman.

My Luxemburger had his supper in the kitchen, declining to join us for political reasons. We had a most excellent company. I desire no better company than that of educated Englishmen. I was in hopes that they would become boisterous again, but they, as they explained to me, were on the war-trail, and took but little wine, only comparing maps. At half-past two my good young guide came for me. They also ordered out their horses. I parted from the kindly, gentle English War Correspondents, but not from their writings.

CHAPTER XLII.

I THOUGHT very much of my fantastic companions, as I and my guide rode away through the sleeping villages. No one noticed us there at all, and, oddly enough, when morning dawned, no one noticed us either. The Luxemburgers refused to see us in any way at all. Their uniform is of the most modest sort, many of your English volunteer regiments are gayer. Yet for me, with a white cloak lined with scarlet, a blue tunic, red trousers, and a gold-hilted sword, they had no eyes whatever.

We carefully skirted the frontier, keeping on the right side of N——. It was a most remarkable thing that the *douaniers* were quite as blind as the peasants. I saw them go into their barracks whenever we approached. At the very last, near Petange, I

caught an officer who was coming round the corner. He at once addressed me in English. He said,

"English officers should scarcely travel in uniform, sir."

"It is extremely bad manners," I replied. "I will not transgress again."

"You will get us into serious trouble if you do," he said, and passed on.

"Longwy is close now," remarked my guide.

"Yes," I answered; "we will go this way, through the wood, and drop down on it nicely."

"Then you know this country?"

"Now I do. Do you know that my brother was killed here fifteen years ago by a wolf?"

"There was only one boy killed like that in the time of the Crimean war. What did you say your name was?"

"Valentin Schneider."

"Great heaven," he said, "then you are the wehr-wolf!"

We were deep in the wood above Longwy as he said this, and I answered, or rather began to answer, "That ridiculous story—" when he pointed with his whip, and said,

"Look there!"

There was a very large wolf in the forest path before us, with the blazing morning sun shining down on his coat. I bethought me of something. I thought that influence was influence, and might be useful. I threw my rein to my guide, and jumped off my horse, leaving him in terror.

I ran up to the wolf and called him to me. Then I stroked his head, and kissed his face. Then I ordered him away into the dense copse-wood, and he went.

Now you are puzzled. Well, I will deceive you no longer. It was no more a wolf than your sister's Skye terrier is a wolf. It was a large sheep-dog used to children, as all sheep-dogs are, and I had just ordered him back to his master.

My guide looked on me with deep awe.

"Then it is true about you," he said.

"Many things are true and many untrue in this world," I said, sententiously.

"Yes. But I can believe all things now. Your brother was killed here by a wolf in the snow?"

"Yes," I said.

He turned to me and made a certain sign. I saw that he was a Carbonaro; but I looked him steadily in the eyes, and would give no reply.

I said directly,

"Ha, here are the chimneys of lower Longwy below us ; now we had better part, kind friend. You must accept these four napoleons from me."

He hesitated.

"It is too much," he said.

"SHE will like something pretty," I said.

"*Bon !*" he answered ; "you would persuade Satan to be good with that French tongue of yours. See, I will give you something for your money."

"And what is that ?" I said, hoping for intelligence about the movements of troops.

He pulled up his horse and said,

"Is there any man whom you love better than another in this world ? I do not mean woman, for I know all."

I said,

"Yes, my father."

"Every man except a dog loves his father," he replied ; "I mean a young man."

"Yes, I love one young man nearly as well as my wife."

"And his name ?"

"Mark."

"I know you now. I have seen you together when you did not think it. Mark is your own brother."

I saw it all in a dense mist. I remembered something in Mark's eyes for which I could not account. But I was emphatically determined to have the whole matter out.

"Man," I said, "how can you prove this ?"

"Does not your own heart prove it ? Do you not know your remarkable likeness to him ? If you want proofs, go to Mère Hortense."

"But he was killed."

"He was *not* ; he was stolen by Mère Hortense, to annoy your father. The Carbonari all know *that*."

"Why ?"

"I cannot tell ; your father did her some injury, and she revenged it in that way."

"You will drive me mad. What relation was Marie, my wife, to Mère Mathilde ?"

"None whatever."

"Thank heaven," I said ; for a horrible doubt had crept into my mind.

"She was no relation to any one," he said. "Had she been, a hundred of us would have told you. Now, good-bye."

And so he turned and left me. Mark my own brother ! Does

Nature ever err? When he twined his pretty feet with mine, they seemed to me like no other feet. I could see it all as plainly as possible now.

Bang! and a boom through the forest. The morning gun from Longwy; the dreams of the night were over.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE drawbridge was down, and I rode clattering in. Headquarters were already astir, and leaving my horse I went upstairs.

The Commandant and a certain great French General were sitting together over coffee and business. They received me very courteously. If the General had known the company I had been in the quarter of an hour previously, as a strong Napoleonist he might not have been quite so well satisfied.

I put my despatches before the Commandant; he, as a matter of etiquette, handed them to the General, who read them.

While he did so, I watched the shrewd, beautiful old face, bronzed with Algerian, Crimean, and Italian suns. When he had finished them he handed them to the Commandant, who said,

"He must be nearly past us, General."

"I do not think it," said the General. "I cannot believe it. These despatches are dated last night, sir. You must have ridden fast."

"By which route could you have come?" said the Commandant of Longwy.

"Pst! Pst! don't ask questions," said the General.

"I have ridden all night," I replied, "save an hour which I spent while I baited my horse with some English lunatics at——"

"Don't tell more than you are asked," said the General. "You have behaved splendidly. You shall hear of this some day, my child. Old moustache," to the commandant, "did you ever do better than this?"

"Not I. This baby-faced boy is like one of those boys which the English breed. You remember the boy Arbuthnot, the young ensign, who fell with the flag over him at the Alma?"

I was a little nettled at his quoting an English boy. I said, "And you also doubtless remember the French boy Casabianca, who was blown up in the *Orient* because he would not leave his

post. And I beg to add, gentlemen, that I am not a boy, but a married man."

They were both startled, and asked me to sit down.

They whispered together for some time, and then the General said,

"Sir, I did not notice your name. You are the younger M. Schneider of Sedan?"

"Yes."

"You are aware that your father has deserted France?"

"He was a German. I am a Frenchman. He will do nothing against France. He has removed his property. He has done nothing at all else."

"Good; but you are utterly for France?"

"Should I have violated every law of national honour for her, as I did last night," I answered, "if I was not prepared to die for her?"

"Your bride is in Germany?" said the General.

"She is," I said; "and I shall never see her until the secret of the French army has been told to the world—I mean if I am not killed."

"What is the secret of the French army, M. Schneider?"

"Attenuated battalions. The same secret exists with regard to the English army, but that is of no consequence."

He rang a bell. "See to M. Schneider's horse," he said. "You are going on a very long and dangerous journey, M. Schneider."

I bowed.

"I do not think that there is much chance of your succeeding, M. Schnieder. You will either be killed or taken prisoner."

I bowed again.

"The Germans are pressing us very closely, and we do not know what may happen. You have shown fine powers of riding swiftly, and you must use them. Will you look at this map?"

I did so. He put down his hand on a place called Ste. Marie aux Chênes, and he said, "You must be there in twenty-four hours."

It did not seem to me at all impossible. I said it would be easy.

"Not so easy as you think," he said. "Did you ever hear of Uhlans?"

I said, "Yes, but really know very little about them." I thought that they were something of the nature of Cossacks or Pandours, Mahrattas or Mamelukes. I had no idea that they were men selected from every cavalry regiment in Germany, two by two. I will say more of them afterwards.

"The Uhlans are thirty miles in front of the main line of the Germans. You must mind them."

"I am afraid of no German."

"But you might be afraid of two," said the dry old General. "You have to carry despatches."

"Give them to me, sir, and I will start at once."

"On the contrary, you will breakfast with me and M. le Commandant; you will then go to bed, sleep for four hours, and then you will ride."

There was a very good breakfast. I ate ravenously till I was satisfied, then I proposed to lie on the sofa. But the wise old Algerian made me take my clothes off and get into his bed. He even insisted on my changing my shirt. When I dropped to sleep I saw him putting the windows open and arranging my clothes.

Then I went into Fairyland. Marie and I and my father and mother were gathering lilies in a most beautiful garden, and Jacques Cartier came, and we gave him some of our lilies. And Mère Mathilde came with a wolf beside her, and she said to my father, "Come and look at your work." And we all went and looked; and Mark was lying, stark and bloody, with his white gaiters turned up to the sky; and I thought that Marie would have cried, but she did not. She touched my eyes, and then I saw a beautiful angel looking in Mark's face with curiosity and pity, and the angel turned to Marie and to me, and I called to it by name, for it was Mark himself; and then the angel spread its wings and flew away, leaving only Mark's corpse upon the ground. I burst from Marie, and made a wild effort to get at the angel to say good-bye, and I felt a strong arm round my chest, and heard a voice say,

"Steady; you have been dreaming."

It was the Commandant of Longwy.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE General was also sitting on the bed. He said, "You must keep all your wits about you, my boy."

"What time is it?" I asked.

"Half-past one. We have been discussing together, and we have come to a certain determination. The most important despatch shall not be written. I will give you my authority to

the Emperor, and that will carry you anywhere ; but you must tell the words which I tell you to no one but a general. Here are your clothes ; dress yourself. We have got you a good horse. Put on your cloak with the red side outwards, and God speed you. *You must* be at Ste. Marie aux Chênes by morning."

I was on horseback in ten minutes, as fresh as possible. They gave me two glasses of claret, and then the General led me down the street, where no one could hear, as he told me my despatch in a few words.

"Tell the Emperor to avoid *Sedan*. The whole thing is concerted, and I know it ; move every man to the right, and make for Paris. Tell him not to stand till he comes to Chalons, and then only for a short time."

I learnt this by heart, and then I sped away through the glorious summer weather over the plains of Lorraine.

The message was never delivered to any one who listened to it. In my opinion it would not have made very much difference if it had been. It would most emphatically have saved the surrender at Sedan, but it would not have saved us elsewhere.

Heaven defend any nation from Vauban's fortifications. A strong place without large star forts outside is a mere mousetrap. Take Luxemburg, for instance, the strongest place in the world. Why any fool could take Luxemburg in three or four days. The Prussians knew that very well, and not being ready for war in that year, dropped it, as the Irish say, like a red-hot potato. *They* were not going to have an army corps, or possibly three, hemmed in that valley. When they left Luxemburg they were just preparing to put a series of star forts around it, at a mile's radius from the glacis ! With modern artillery and engineering, a man who could not take Luxemburg as it stands, has no earthly right to draw his pay.

If you think that this is *incroyable*, just look at the case of Sedan. Nay, look at every one of Vauban's fortresses ; and I hear your French and English officers saying that taking a fortress is only "a matter of time." Certainly, with regard to one of Vauban's fortresses, with modern ideas pitted against it. But give the Germans Luxemburg or Belfort for a year, and the world would not get it from them. They are, I see, doing the matter of outlying forts at Strassburg and Metz, so those towns are hopelessly gone.

Honour where honour is due. That funny little civilian, M. Thiers (whom I do not admire), was the first man in France to see this. He, as nearly as possible, saved Paris by his genius. Let us hope that he may save France.

CHAPTER XLV.

You can put your horse at a gallop over those lovely cultivated downs in Lorraine and Champagne, and ride as straight as an eagle flies. We know that to our ruin. The subdivision of land has made every inch of ground valuable, and so we have no hedges at all. I should like to see a German army advancing through the county of Kent, just for curiosity's sake, before the volunteers of three counties. I am under the impression that I would back the volunteers if they were properly handled.

Give them proper organisation and proper recognition, and they would play very heavy mischief with an invading army till your regular army was ready (which it seldom is). As for your regular army, they were made to conquer, and they always have conquered. You English have scarcely a disaster to show out of America. I can only remember two, both in Holland.

I had a fancy that the air of Champagne made the wine, for as I rode (by the compass) the air was blowing from the pearly blue hills of Champagne, far to the right, and I felt as though I had drank a bottle of Moët or Veuve Cliquot. My horse was a splendid beast, French bred, for he had the blood of his sire Monarque in his veins, and his granddam was Blink Bonny. He had been crossed into the grand Norman blood, and was heavier than a race-horse, but had possibly more terrible powers of endurance.

I think that in your Life Guards the horses are a little too small for the men, though they are unsurpassed as cavalry horses. It is not that the horses are too small, but the men are too large.

This horse of mine, Rataplan, could carry me as a racehorse carries a jockey. I was only ten stone as I rode, your Life Guards ride fifteen; and Rataplan (to use your calculation) stood nearly eighteen hands. I should have ridden straight through the Chasseurs d'Afrique, with their pretty, weedy little Arabs.

I rode very hard, and towards evening I came to a little solitary farm, a rare thing in those parts, where the farmers live in the large villages; and so, in case of an invasion, put, to speak in a military sense, all their eggs in one basket. There was a very pretty maiden watering the cows, and as I am very fond of all maidens, pretty or otherwise (as I hope you are), I determined to alight here and get my horse fed.

She was very glad to see a French uniform. It was the first she had seen for twelve hours.

This seemed very ominous.

"You see," she said, as I was taking the saddle off, "that the good Emperor is tempting these dogs of Prussians on in order to destroy them ; so I suppose that we shall have them here."

"Are you afraid of them ?"

"I ! Not I. I was in Trèves, for a year, and was always among them. They are barbarians, and talk a savage language which I never could learn ; but they are kind dogs enough. The people at St. Privat and Ste. Marie are afraid of them. Not I. Possibly one of them may try to give me a beery kiss, in which case I should slap his face, just as I should yours, if you offered to do it, and we should part friends."

I said, "I should accept that challenge if I were not married."

"It is impossible ; yet I think it must be true ; or, young as monsieur looks, he would have given me reason to smack his face."

We both laughed. She was such a very pretty, plucky girl that I felt anxious about her. When we were in the stable together feeding my horse, I urged her to fly.

She said,

"No. My grandmother and I keep this farm, the men have gone away, and I got my grandmother away this morning."

"Do you mean to say that you are going to remain alone here ?"

I said, aghast.

"Most certainly," she said. "Am I not a Frenchwoman ? And you mistake the Germans. They will not hurt me, I know, the sentimental fools."

"They are plundering in every direction," I said.

"That is very likely," she replied, coolly. "I have heard of the French, nay, even of the saintly English doing the same thing. If they plunder me they will not get very rich ; for if they can find my grandmother's gold (of which there is a good deal) it is more than I can. I know that she has hidden it in the house, but where, I have not the least idea. Come in and eat while your horse is eating."

She gave me cheese and wine. While I was eating, I said,

"Did your grandmother desert you ?"

"No ; she is a very clever woman. She, as an old Alsatian, knew the Germans, and knew that I was a better guard for the house than twenty hot-headed men. If our two men had stayed (which they did not) we should have had a fracas, and might have had the house burnt down. My grandmother would not tell me where the gold was, lest some riotous men of our own nation should force me to tell. Eat fast, the Uhlans cannot be far off. Pierre Leroy saw them ten miles off at one o'clock. I will go and saddle your horse for you."

"Mais, mademoiselle?"

"Yes. Be tranquil. You must rest. Where are you going?"

"To Ste. Marie aux Chênes."

"You must ride hard. If you have despatches, read them and burn them here now."

"I carry no important despatches on paper, I have them in my head."

"*Bon.* Look out at the door, and let me serve France by saddling your horse."

"I cannot bear it."

"Please let me serve France, monsieur," she said.

How could I help it? She would do it, and Bayard himself could not have resisted her. She brought my horse round, and then she made me hold him while she rolled up my cloak with the red side outwards.

She then put it over my right shoulder and under my left arm, then she tied the ends with a piece of string under my left arm. I saw that my left arm and my right arm were quite free, and that the thick rolled cloak covered my heart.

"I learnt that at Trêves," she said, laughing. "By heavens! here they are. Take this kiss to madame your wife, and go for the sake of her."

I kissed her, but I would not leave her until she had urged me in such a way that I could not refuse. Then I left her.

There were those two black specks on the hill before us, which I knew well to be the terrible Uhlans. I rode straight towards them, and when I was within pistolshot of them I waved a white handkerchief. They both trotted towards me at once. I wheeled and covered them with my Deane and Adam's revolver, knowing perfectly well that I could bring down both their horses. I cried out, "Ein! Ein!"

One fellow, a very nice young fellow indeed, came forward towards me. I talked to him in German. I told him that our pickets were close by (as indeed they were, though I did not know it), but that I was very anxious about the farm in the valley below, as it was held by a solitary young lady. I hoped that they would respect her splendid courage.

The young man said frankly that they did not make war against women, and that I might be well assured.

I nodded to him and sped away.

But I must tell you the end of this episode. Affairs had not heated themselves at that time, and there was much chivalry among outposts. As for German chivalry towards women, I think that has never been disputed. But among the soldiers there was but little anger at this time.

As I heard afterwards, within an hour after I rode away towards Ste. Marie aux Chênes, two squadrons of cavalry rode up to and surrounded this young French girl's farm. The officer in command drew up bareheaded in the entrance to the farmyard, and called on the owner to come out.

The pretty solitary girl came out and confronted him.

"I am all alone, monsieur," she said.

"So we have been given to understand," said the German. "In consequence of the necessity of war we must spend the night here."

"All is yours."

"Mademoiselle exaggerates with the politeness of her nation. Nothing is ours. Will mademoiselle point out to us the apartments which she desires to keep? If there is a battle I cannot insure mademoiselle; until that happens I can. If any of my soldiers offer any rudeness to you, will you please mention it to me?"

There were three hundred and twenty men quartered in her house that night, and not one would stay covered as she passed in and out. All the chivalry of their nature was aroused by her fearless courage and trust in the German respect for women and children. They hurrahd to her as they went away, and the officer, who stayed last and had calculated the cost, offered her the money for the things which they had bought of her. She burst into tears, and said, as she handed it back to him,

"Pour les pauvres prisonniers, monsieur. Pour les pauvres prisonniers de la France."

The house was held sacred after that. No battle was fought there: but it passed from battalion to battalion of the Germans. That one heroic girl had stayed behind in the farm when all the men had fled. She was a heroine among the Germans.

Strong feeling was manifested against her by the French. She was accused of being a German spy, and of more things than I dare write. A Bavarian sergeant, it is said, won her heart while he was lying wounded at Briey. I know not how true that may be, but her end was very sad. She had to go to a violently French village not far from the Belgian frontier, on business for her grandmother. She was known there, and was insulted by several young men. She had to go out to a house outside the village after dark, but she never reached it. She was brutally murdered, it is supposed, from all that can be gathered, by a mob of revolutionists, for a German spy, and the end is too painful to tell.

CHAPTER XLVI.

WHEN General Ducrot gave me a certain order I was filled with pleasure. The order was a very simple one. "You will carry these despatches to the Emperor, sir, and say that we await his orders." I did so at once, and it seemed to me that the Emperor had no orders to give.

He was at Fond de Givonne, sitting in my father's garden under the vine. It seemed so very strange to see him there. It is possible, however, that I am writing too fast, and shall have to go back a little, as your good Thackeray did; he, you remember, in "Pendennis," writes his first scene and then goes back for eighteen or twenty years to explain it. Well, I am not Thackeray or Dumas, I have only taken the liberty of ten minutes.

When I arrived at my father's door on the thirty-first of August, I found that our house was honoured by many guests whom we would have dispensed with. Heaven defend us from the Prussians, with their dirty boots and their tobacco; but heaven also defend us from French staff-officers, who are just as bad. My mother's drawing-room was filled with them, and when I went upstairs I found a young officer lying on Marie's bed, on *my* bed, smoking. How near that young officer was to getting his nose pulled and his ears boxed, I decline to say. I knew that the Saxons were straight in front of us, and that the Bavarians were turning our left. My solitary hope was in Vinoy on our right.

There has been more lying about that battle than about any battle ever fought, and this is saying a great deal. Even the Germans, who generally speak the truth when they win, do not speak the truth about Sedan. However, I roused the young French officer from Marie's bed and made him take me to the Emperor.

He was sitting under our vine smoking. He was extremely courteous, and motioned me to one of my own father's chairs. He had little remembrance that I was a very violent Orleanist, but it would have made no difference to him. My opinion is now, as it always has been, that the man was a gigantic gambler like his uncle, and that he began to see that the game was played out.

He took my despatches and put them aside, all save one. That one he read very attentively. I knew that it was from an eminent lady, and I heard him say,

"Women are more often wrong than right."

"M. Schneider," he said to me, after a pause, "this is your house, I believe?"

"It is my father's, your Majesty."

"Present my compliments to him, if you please, and apologise for the liberties I have taken with it."

"My father will be proud, sire. For myself I am an Orleanist, and serve only France."

"Well," said he, "they are the only hope for a regenerated France. Where are the Bavarians?"

"They are closing on our left, sire."

"Ah, that is a bad business. These Prussians make the smaller states do all the fighting."

"Sire," I said, "will you not save yourself? I know Sedan; I was born there and brought up here. I can take you by a hundred ways out of this place. Sire, let me save you, for to-morrow's field is lost. Sire, I have unwritten despatches which I got at Longwy. Sire, you must avoid Sedan." And I told him all.

I never shall forget the awful look of affectionate pity which I got. "Boy," he said, "would your friend D'Aumale do such a thing?"

I was obliged to say "No."

"Then do you think that a Buonaparte dare do what a Bourbon dare not? No, I dare not leave a legacy of infamy to my son."

I respected the man from that moment. But——

The man had ruined France, and he began to see how he had been deceived. He saw that he was a ruined gambler, and he tried hard to die.

He is too personally brave for actual suicide. Suicide is the act of a coward. The Emperor, with all his faults, is a Frenchman and therefore no coward.

He put his hand on my shoulder, and said,

"Boy, you are married, I think?"

"Yes, sire."

"See if this ring will fit your wife's finger. I shall not have much to give soon; I have saved nothing."

As the last remark is an actual fact, it is as well to write it down.

The Emperor has come out of it all with very clean hands. All we true Orleanists allow that.

I left the Emperor and went to get some supper. I got sausage and wine. There had been a heavy business at La Chapelle that morning, and the men had come in from it. I ate my sausage and drank my wine, and knowing that there would be a terribly heavy day to-morrow, I went to bed, in my own bed and in Marie's.

Different people have different tempers. I have a very gentle temper towards women and children, but a very bad one towards men. I went upstairs, and found my bedroom occupied by officers. That was all well and good. It was for dear old France. So I rummaged about in cupboards which I knew of, and got them blankets. Two had been at La Chapelle, were wounded and groaning. I got them on to Marie's bed, and did the best I could with them. I told them all that this was my father's house, and that they and the Emperor were my guests, and then I went downstairs, and in a *particular manner* opened my father's wine cellar, to get them some wine.

The Germans never found out that trick, and they don't know it now. It was an invention of my father's. You had only to press your thumb heavily on the lower part of the lock, and the whole thing came open. My father says that he was brought into the world to lose keys, and so he made this arrangement. My mother never learnt the trick. She is very like Mrs. Shandy.

I took a light and looked round; there was no one near. I pressed the spring and went into the wine-cellar. In one instant I had a hand in my hair, and I saw a knife flash towards my left breast.

As God's mercy would have it, I had my scarlet and white cloak on; that saved me. The candle was thrown down but was not put out. I fought, but it was only with a woman. I got her wrists in mine, and looked at her by the light of the candle.

It was Mère Mathilde.

"You old wretch!" I said; "why did you want to stab me?"

"I did not want to stab *you*," she said; "I thought that I was discovered."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am told off by the Carbonari to assassinate the Emperor, the Decembriseur. Do you know that you are denounced?"

"By whom?"

"By the Carbonari."

"Take them my bitter defiance," I replied.

"Jacques Cartier and Mark are both denounced also. And the Fenians are determined to have the Queen of England's life."

"The Fenians are great fools," I said; "but they are not such idiots as to turn the world against them by killing the most pure, spotless, and august lady in the world. You must go out of the house, or I will give you up."

She went, and I took some bottles of wine and went upstairs with them. When I got upstairs, there were not two men on my

bed, but three. The third was the young staff officer who had previously offended me. I told him that this was my house, and that was my bed. I would gladly share my bed with a wounded comrade, but I requested him to get off it. He lay there and smoked; I sadly wanted some one to quarrel with, and I found him. I took him by the heels, and had him off the bed on to the floor. I never had greater satisfaction in doing anything in my life.

There was of course a terrible quarrel, and an arrangement to meet on the next morning. He was fearfully angry, and said that one of us must die. I quite agreed if it pleased him, and laughed in his face. I had not the remotest intention of fighting him. In the first place no married man is forced to fight unless his wife or sister is in question; and in the second place, the idea of two staff officers fighting in the presence of the enemy was absurd. I let him fume, and lay down beside my two wounded friends to sleep.

I slept on that night of doom without a dream. I rose once only, to get one of my wounded friends some water. I looked out of the window, and saw that the stars were shining. One of the most beautiful nights I ever saw was that night of the 31st of August. What will the night before the day of judgment be like?

It was before dawn when I was awakened by a *chasseur-à-pied*. I rose, and he said,

"General Ducrot wants you. Come."

I rose and made myself very tidy (we French do that quicker than you English can), and I went down. He had just arrived, and was sitting in his shirt-sleeves, writing.

"M. Schneider," he said, "you know these parts well?"

"I have the honour to entertain his Majesty the Emperor and General Ducrot as my guests. This house is my father's, and I was brought up here."

"You know the way to Givonne?"

I laughed. "Does M. le General know the way round Madame Ducrot's flower-garden?"

He smiled faintly. "To-day is the end of all things, or I should laugh at your fatality. Surely *you* will not be killed?"

"Surely not, General," I answered.

"How far is it from here at Fond de Givonne to Givonne?"

"Two miles."

"Get your horse and go to the height above Givonne; take this to the colonel of the 17th of the line. Make haste."

I left him instantly, and got my horse saddled.

The 17th of the line ! It was Mark's regiment. I should go through it with them, and my brother and I should meet in death.

I rode towards Givonne as hard as I could go, but before I reached there the fate of France was sealed.*

CHAPTER XLVII.

THEY moved so suddenly and sharply that we were not ready for them. I could see the stars still when it began. The 17th were sleeping in the potato and onion field on the left off the road when I rode up. My horse, Rataplan, stepped gingerly among the sleeping bodies, and I found the Colonel of the 17th on horseback and smoking. I gave him General Ducrot's orders, and he read them.

"Lieutenant," he said, "my men are as tired as dogs ; the Saxons also must be tired : you are well mounted ; ride across those two fields, and see what you can. Bugler, sound *réveille*."

My ride was never accomplished ; I got to the little hedge above the cutting in the road just as the bugler blew, and I saw four young men, without their boots, rise from the straw in which they were lying, and look sleepily about them. The next instant the devil's game began.

Within two hundred yards a terrible but not continuous volley of musketry poured in on us from the Saxons. The four men near me went down at once. I was not hit, strange to say, but of the four men sleeping in the *paille*, only one rose again. He was bareheaded and in his stockinged feet. He began to fire rapidly across the cutting, and I saw a tall Saxon, a nice-looking young gentleman, roll off his horse sideways, with his hands to

* The author wishes it to be understood that he saw the battle of Sedan from the *German* side, and merely gives his own account of it from a very careful examination of the dead on the 3rd, when very few had been buried. It would seem that no coherent account of this battle has been published as yet, unless it is in Messrs. Cassell's "History of the War." It appears to him that no consistent account of any battle was ever published since the world began. The most coherent accounts of battles are those of Thermopylæ, Salamis, Trafalgar, and Waterloo, but no one agrees about them. Younger readers must remember that the battle of Sedan was by far the greatest which has ever been seen ; 80,000 prisoners and an Emperor, with six hundred cannon. The world has never seen the like.

his head. My instinct told me that he was dead, and I was sorry for him, for, after all, our quarrel was not with the Saxons, but with the Prussians. I fired as rapidly as I could with my revolver, with the solitary pair of red breeches before me ; I knew my young man was badly wounded, and I called to him to come to the rear, but he would not. We were now partly protected by the little hedge, and I kept my horse's nose carefully against a poplar tree. My wounded young man also seemed to me to know what he was about, for he kept his head very carefully behind another poplar tree. How well I know those poplar trees now !

It was three minutes before the regiment was aroused. During that time the young man and I were simply fighting the whole of the 29th regiment of Saxons. It was no deed of heroism at all ; they had nothing to fire at except us, and like really good soldiers as they were, they having knocked over the outpost, had nothing to fire at except us two, and as we were behind trees, they could not hit us. I heard my young man laughing.

Then I saw the ghastly steel blue line of the Saxon rifles go to the shoulder, and so I knew that our 17th were in fighting order now. I gave one glance behind, only one, and I saw two or three strange things, as I was loading my revolver.

The 17th regiment was coming on in line, through the potato field. The Colonel was leading in the centre on a tall chestnut horse. The sun had scarcely risen, but the light of the morning was on their tired, hungry faces.

Then I looked behind the Colonel, and I saw my own father's house.

Then I saw before me a German staff officer in blue, and I saw that men were coming with spades. "Are they going to bring artillery to their centre ?" I thought. Prussians would never do that. They were pitching the earth about, however. I fired six shots at the staff officer, but I could not hit him. I rode to the next tree where the young man was, and I said,

"Pick off that staff officer."

"I can't hit him," said the young man ; "he is covered."

"Run out," I said, "to the next tree. I can't hit him with this English revolver. Try that for old France ; if it is suddenly done the chances are two hundred to one in your favour ; you will cover him from the next tree."

I rode with him from the one tree to the other, and gave him a hold of my stirrup. My horse was hit through the neck, but the young man, who kept his face averted from me, never reached the other tree, and never killed the Saxon officer. The horrible affray

was well on between the two regiments now, and I saw my young man throw away his rifle, and hang heavily on to my stirrup.

Then, for the first time, he turned his face to mine, and fell dead.

Oh, heaven, send us pity in this wicked world! It was my brother Mark. Gained only to be lost!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

I BELIEVE that if a curse could kill, I should have killed the whole German army that day, from the brutes of Prussians (who had not so very much to do with it) down to the gentle and refined Bavarian Tyrolese. The Saxons dashed at us and beat us; there is no use in disguising the matter. The reason why the Saxons beat us is simply that they fought better. In my opinion, the people who fought best of all in that wretched war were the Bavarians. And look what the Prussians said of them and the other armies of the Bund in old times. Yet they can put them forward to win at Sedan and at Orleans. I tell you, young English gentleman, that the Emperor of the French's calculations about the independent states refusing to join Prussia in a war against France were not entire leagues wrong. It was a very doubtful matter; and it is my opinion that if my father had not been told by the Carbonari he would have been ruined.

You have, most of you, been in a sham fight; for you English exercise arms very much. In fact, I see that the aristocratic college of Eton marches to-day four hundred to Wimbledon, to engage in battle with your gigantic cuirassiers of the guard. This appears to me at first sight dangerous. I do not like it when strong men are mounted against boys. It is not a place for reflections at all, but we French think always. Paris is the centre for intelligence and thought now, as Rome was in old times.

Well, a sham fight differs not very much from a real one, if you have nerve. In a sham fight no one is killed, but in a real one you merely miss your comrade, and whether you are in advance or retreat, you know nothing about him. In not one hundred real fights do you get such an incident as that of my meeting my brother at Sedan in the supreme moment. That is why Horace Vernet's pictures, lovely as they are, are totally false. The only war pictures I ever saw which were not false was one called

"The Effect of a Prussian Shell," and those of your English M. Simpson, of the *Illustrated London News*, who has your English *sang-froid* to such an extreme extent, that he executes tableaux of the most divine under the heaviest fire. Your Doctor Russell, again, is a brave boy, and in no other country would you find a physician risking his life to tell of battles, while he neglects the wounded. But you English are not like the others.

[We beg to inform Captain Schneider that Doctor Russell is not a physician, but that he was made Doctor of Common Law by the University of Oxford for his glorious services as a journalist.—ED.]

[Captain Schneider writes in return: "Then I was right when I said that you English did nothing like others. In France we should have given Doctor Russell the Legion of Honour of the first class. In England you make him a judge. What would be thought in France if one rewarded Vinoy by making him a Doctor of the Sorbonne? Do the only honours come from your universities?"]

[Answer from Editor. "No. A large number of Civil C.B., or Commanderships of the Bath, have been given to civilians lately. These all emanate from the Queen, the fountain of honour in our country. That is the crowning honour which we can give to any civilian. The gentlemen selected for this honour are carefully chosen by the most august lady in the world, and most men would give ten years of their life to write the letters after their name. Next to this honour, the highest honour which a civilian can receive is that of D.C.L., given by our two great seats of learning. May I ask if you will continue your account of the battle of Sedan, or let me know?"]

[Answer from Captain Schneider. "I will not write another word until you tell me whether the Victoria Cross is given to civilians?"]

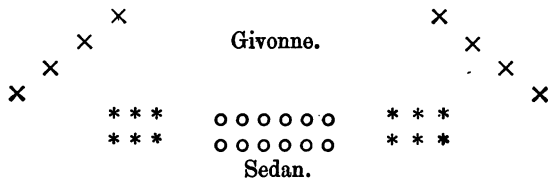
[Answer from Editor. "Lord bless the man, no. It is a military order. We reward civilians for bravery by the medal of the Humane Society. Do go on; we shall be late again this month."]

[Captain Schneider writes: "I refuse to go on until I express my opinion that you English are no good at all. I am sorry to have been led into this discussion; but I will register my thought that the Queen is ill-advised not to do as we do in France, to give the highest honour to those who distinguish themselves. Are Miss Nightingale, Miss Burdett Coutts, or Miss Mary Stanley, V.C. or C.B.? I say nothing of the two English ladies who came into burning Bazeilles."]

[Editor writes: "How many legions of honour have been given to ladies in France?" And Captain Schneider does not know, but sends us some more copy, and high time too.]

CHAPTER XLIX.

Do you perceive that if you fire straight on a regiment in line you have only the chance of hitting two men at the outside; whereas if you can turn the flank of a regiment, you have your chance at one hundred men instead of at two. Our flank was turned, and what was happening to our regiment was happening to our whole army. Both our flanks were turned. In the case of the whole army we were by nine o'clock in this position, if our editor will kindly allow us a little diagram. The crosses go for *German* artillery, the noughts go for *French* artillery, and the asterisks for French infantry. The matter was altered after, before eleven, because the cavalry were then hard at work, but at, say, from seven to nine o'clock, the battle was very much like this:—



This plan is utterly deficient, for the Bavarians had turned Bazeilles, and had burnt it on our *real left*, which is the right in the above plan. If you reverse it you will see that throughout that day, and throughout many other days, we infantry never got near the Germans without being heavily pounded by artillery. My poor friend Rossel, who took to the Radicals, saw this very clearly. The Germans risked their guns and kept them, we refused to risk ours and lost them.

I am sorry to say that after six o'clock, I, inexperienced as I was, saw a disaster impending. Our Colonel never lost his head for a moment, but when the artillery fire came full upon us, I regret to say that some of our officers did. Our men fought like Turks or Frenchmen, but some of our officers were by no means

up to the mark. We were beaten back point after point. Our Colonel was not hit, as I thought, and I thought that I was not hit myself, till I noticed a long streak of blood down my white cloak. The Colonel, at whose side I was, said, "You are hit, my child. I also am hit with a death-wound. Take this, Schneider. Allons, mes braves, vous gagnez toujours."

He tore a gold chain from round his neck with a locket hanging to it, and gave it to me. "You will see to whom to give it. Allons, mes garçons! Allons, mes enfants!"

We made three mad dashes at the Saxons, but the good fellows held their own, and their artillery was playing upon us over their heads with fearful rapidity. By nine o'clock our regiment had become a disorderly mob, and to my unutterable astonishment, as I looked round I saw that we were at the head of the street of Fond de Givonne.

Suddenly the Colonel shouted to me in a strange voice, "Ride to the right, Schneider. Catch the Emperor or Ducrot, and tell him that all is lost here unless we are reinforced." He rolled heavily off his saddle. I dashed away to the right, knowing every lane in the country for miles round.

The frightful ruin and confusion was the worst ever known in war. We were pent into the crater of Vesuvius. I was getting horribly sick, with a fearful thirst upon me; but I found the Emperor in Sieur Delafone's garden. They were preparing a last charge, which the Emperor was to head. I began speaking of reinforcements. He waved his hand and smiled. "Join our charge, my boy," he said, "that is the best reinforcement."

"Up that lane, sire," I said; "And keep under the walls. I will show the way."

That charge was made, but I never saw it.

A general said to me, "Ride to the right within our lines, and get to Vinoy. Tell him that if everything be lost, he must get to Paris. They have turned our left; tell him to mind he sees that the right is not turned."

I was very sick and faint, getting worse and worse. I was in the *mêlée* again. I drew up suddenly among a company of Turcos, who were fighting very well. Their only officer was wounded, and seeing cavalry coming down on us I gave the word for rallying square, and had the savages round me in a moment.

The German cavalry came up at us full gallop, a very foolish thing to do. The young gentleman who led them, a fine fellow, was unhorsed, and one or two of the front rank were killed. They wheeled; the young German gentleman running with a trooper's stirrup in his hand. Two or three stupid savages, seeing his

orders, ran out at him to get them. They were at us again in a minute, and sent us flying, for our ranks were broken ; but this young gentleman was unhorsed, and apparently forgetting the circumstances ran among the Turcos, cutting right and left. I knew what would happen. I cannot tell what happens with Turcos. I saw that ten or so were lying down and shamming dead. I saw a Turco ready with his rifle, and I held up both my hands to him as I rode up.

"I am your prisoner," I said ; " come here ! "

He came to take me, and I seized him with my failing strength and hoisted him on the saddle before me. I thought that I was going to die, and I wished to save one life, even if it were a Prussian's. I have learnt to like the Prussians better since, but I hated them then.

As I trotted towards my captors, the savage dogs gave me a volley in my rear, which hit me through the shoulder, but which never hit my captor.

He told me afterwards that the German cavalry then and there exterminated those Turcos.

For me, my captor did not get his will of my person ; for in the first place he thought I was dead and let me drop, and in the second one of the finest parts of the cavalry business at Sedan was fought right before me as I was lying on the ground. I was not unconscious, and I prayed. I fear I prayed that the Germans might win, because I should have been stamped into pieces if they had lost.

The Chasseurs of Barbary had made a last mad charge against the Germans. I could see the flicker of the swords like lightning on the summer night. This German regiment was in line, do you see, and so beyond the dark blue line of the fighting Germans, I could perfectly well see the white and scarlet of our men. Strangely enough, as it seemed to me, the Germans beat back our men. That seemed very strange, because, as I remarked before, the Germans being in line, there were but two German regiments between me and one of the most splendid cavalry regiments in the world.

I was not in much pain ; I was beyond pain, and I thought about it. Wellington, a man who never lost a battle or a gun, the *cleverest* general of the last generation, rebuked your George IV. by telling him that the French cavalry were the best in the world ; yet I saw what I should have thought the crack regiment in Europe go back before men I should have called German louts. There was no demoralisation. The men fought like *men*, and, as far as I could see, their swordsmanship was splendid. In fact, all the world knows that I laugh in speaking of it. But they were

driven back in fair fight, though Miss Dixon tells me that she and Miss Braby found ten Germans in that part of the field to one Frenchman. Colonel Descorches says that our Chasseurs were underhorsed, and that the horses had not been fed. That seems to me very probable indeed. You also, if a volunteer (as I hope you are), should listen to Colonel Descorches, because he says that your volunteers, with a very trifling assistance from your government, might be made one of the most dangerous bodies of men in Europe.

Ah, you should hear the Colonel on the Battle of Dorking. Eh ! but he is amusing, this Colonel. He says : " The English are so triste that they must amuse themselves with something. They amuse themselves with the Battle of Dorking. My dear, if the battle ever came through their own insensate stupidity, it would not make itself at Dorking at all, but 226 kilometres from there."

The Colonel amuses himself with you English. Without doubt you amuse yourself with me, for my French way of telling a story.

I am at present, do you perceive, lying dying on the field of Sedan.

I wish to point out to you that I did not die. I wish to make this clear to you at once by a single question. If I had died who could have written this story ? Therefore I did not die at all. I beg a hundred thousand pardons for pointing out the fact, but you English have no logic, whereas we French are logical to a fault.

Mind, I do not assert that the logic of the Comte de Chambord, the logic of M. Thiers, the logic of M. Gambetta, or the logic of the Commune is quite infallible. The only infallible logic is the House of Orleans. But you English are so illogical that we French have to prove everything in a most indisputable manner to you, and so I have had to prove to you that if I had died at Sedan, I could not possibly have written this story.

CHAPTER L.

THE roar died away as I lay perfectly quiet, but, as I well knew, very heavily wounded. I lay with my face towards Givonne, and so the last thing I heard of the battle was the cannonade and fusillade of Vinoy's retreat towards Paris. I knew perfectly well that we were beaten again, but like a true Frenchman I took it as a matter of course.

Your English generals never fight unless they are sure to win. That peak-nosed Wellington of yours never moved from the lines of Torres Vedras till he knew that he could win every battle. He called Busaco "a political battle," he only fought there because your Parliament wanted a victory in order to obtain supplies. Your Duke was a very great man, in his way greater than Napoleon. He knew, that man Wellington. What does he say? "I consider that the presence of Napoleon amounts in fact to the presence of thirty thousand men." Hah, he values Napoleon's intellect at the rate of thirty thousand men. Are we French nothing then?

Well, do not be hard on us. I will allow that Napoleon was half Greek, half Italian. We in a matter of detail are cleverer than you others, that we attract all the cleverest men in the world. We attract, for example, the Americans. The Americans say, "Good Americans when they die go to Paris." The English are partly attracted to us; the Prussians not at all; *we should like to catch them at it.*

I was with Jacques Cartier only as it were yesterday in Versailles. Count Arnim drove by. I saw Jacques Cartier had on his sword-bayonet, and I pulled it back and kissed him in our French way. He said, "You are right, sweetheart" (that is the way I render *bien-aimé* into English); "not yet."

If we had invaded you successfully, if we had occupied your glorious southern provinces, and if we had treated you as the Prussians have treated us, what would have been the value of a Frenchman's life in England? Your papers talk of us as passionate and furious, they tell us to submit to affairs. What right have they to dictate to us? You never helped us, you could not: but now you tell us to be calm and to submit. Would the conquerors of Hindostan be very calm and submissive with a French army in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex? I think not. I hope not.

Once more. I ask you why the man Bismarck did not trust us, without insulting us by occupying the provinces? I ask that.

[The editor is very sorry to fall out with Captain Schneider again, but he must remind him of the piratical wars of the first Napoleon, during which everything, from fire-irons to porcelain and Raphael pictures, was stolen and carried away to Paris. In the last war no *bêtises* of the kind have occurred. The burning of the Strassburg library was a mere accident, and the removal of the Metz library to Berlin is no great harm after all. It is far safer at Berlin than at Metz. We must let M. Schneider continue his adventures.]

I was lying quite comfortably, because a woman in a red petticoat had brought me some water. But the sun was very hot, and I put my pretty white cloak over my head. It must have been long past two when I heard two voices talking near me.

I knew German as well as a Frenchman can, but I was puzzled by their accent. It was like the croaking of frogs. I cannot reproduce it. They stood on each side of me.

"The Herr Hauptmann says that the French officers are not to be buried with the French soldiers," said one.

"That seems to me a distinction," said the other.

"It is distinct, not different," said the other.

"Give me plain German for that," said the other German.

"Fool, thou hast had no education. Thou knowest not logic."

"No, but I know a pretty Frenchman when I see him. Look at his red legs, his white gaiters, his white cloak with the scarlet lining. Why should such a pretty fellow be killed? It is too bad, Caspar."

I raised my white cloak from my face, and looked at them. They were two great giants in blue, with great heads, and they bent over me.

"We thought you were dead," said one.

"No, but I am a prisoner. I am very hardly hit; but I think that if I could get to an ambulance I might be saved. I want to see my wife again."

"Do you mean to say," said the largest of the Germans, "that a smooth-faced boy like you is married?"

"Yes, sir," I said, for I was getting very thirsty and very humble; "I am married, and what is more"—I went into other particulars.

Caspar said to Fritz, "Carry the boy down to the barn, put him in the straw with the others. I never heard such a story as this. Why, he does not look fifteen."

In one minute I was in the arms of the great German barbarian. My cheek fell into his beard, and I spoke to him.

"Are you one of those Prussians?" I asked.

"I am a Pomeranian," he said, "a Prussian, if you choose."

"Ah ah!" I replied; "Pomerania is where the amber comes from, and also the pretty little white dogs."

"That is the place, officer."

I turned my face over his shoulder and saw my white cloak drooping over his broad blue back. (I must pause to say that the above-named white cloak served me in a singular way, as you shall hear.) He carried me as a full-grown man does an infant.

At last we came to a barn, where there was straw on the ground, into which he laid me very gently, telling me that there were only eighteen or twenty others, and then he went away.

But not for long. He came back with some water in a large pitcher, and then he wanted to give me money, but I told him that I had abundance; and I begged him to do a small commission for me. It is absolutely horrible that such men should be killed. Men with every virtue and all courage put up to fight for what they know not. I say again that it is horrible, this war. In the morning I would have shot this man down like a dog. At mid-day I was blessing him, and was determined (although a Huguenot to the backbone) that my mother should have eighty masses at ten francs each said for his soul.

As I am now lying in the straw in an old barn (which happened to be the property of my own father, if it mattered), and as I have nothing else to tell you, I may mention that when all was over my mother offered this sum to Père Lasel, to do as I wished. He, though a needy man, emphatically refused both money and masses. He was a man of such staunch principles that he would not even pray for a heretic's soul. Some Jesuits will not. I fear that the Emperor's order for the expulsion of the Jesuits will come very hardly on him. He was a very good man Père Lasel, and was not doing very much harm. But the Emperor is right, you cannot have a state within a state.

I lay here for above twenty-four hours, with nothing at all to eat. A German doctor, who was very kind, came in and dressed my wounds. But we got nothing to eat; and then we had bread and water, for which we thanked God.

I could not move in the straw, and I only could talk to one of the men beside me, a Breton, for the man who lay on the other side of me was an Arab, who knew no French at all beyond the words of command. I shared my water with them, and dozed and dreamed my time away until the afternoon of the third.

So strange to be lying in my own barn on the straw. Marie, Marie! where was she now? I got better in the afternoon of the third, and I got up and crawled about assisting the others. I had gold, and I offered it to the sentry for bread. I think that he would have liked the gold, but he told me that there was no bread till five o'clock, and refused my money, asking me to lie down again and rest. This young man came from Ems in Nassau. They must be good people in those parts. I did not lie down, but sat in the sun beside him. He was a married man like myself, and we talked about home and love, until I got weary and crept back to the straw.

My neighbour, the Turco, was snoring comfortably, but my poor Breton was quite dead.

Don't think me a fool or a coward if I tell you that I cried myself to sleep. The only French voice audible to me was stilled for ever.

I took his dead hand in mine as I fell asleep.

I was awakened by some one turning my face over. Two men were kneeling beside me. One I knew at once—he was the brown-bearded English journalist whom I met at Mondorf. The other was a man I had never seen before. I smiled and showed my teeth, which a certain lady says are very good teeth.

"Here is an officer," said the journalist.

"Yes," said the other, an eminent London surgeon, as I afterwards knew. "My dear sir, when were you fed last?"

"Twenty-four hours ago, dear sir."

"You must be fed, dear sir, or you will die."

"I shall not be fed," I replied, smiling; "and I shall not die."

"What," said the surgeon to the journalist, "would you give for a bottle of Liebig's extract *now*?"

"Ten pounds," said the journalist.

"I would give twenty," said the surgeon; "but that is *esprit de corps*. I could save this gentleman, and I could save half the barn, if there was plenty of Liebig. Now, my dear," he said, "I must trouble you to take off that pretty white cloak, which I regret to see is streaked with blood, and that pretty blue tunic, and let me look at you."

I did so.

"So," he said, "you are doing very well;" and then he put on my clothes again with the gentleness of a nurse.

"Here are biscuits and a little brandy. That Turco next you has drank more than his share, but there is a drain left for you. What is the matter with the Chasseur next you, whose hand you were holding? He seems to be sleeping well."

"Oh," I said, "he was dead before I went to sleep. He is a Breton. He was married as I was, and we talked as we lay here of our wives and of old times. So I took his dead hand in mine as I fell asleep. Are the French going to win and come back here?"

"I fear not," said the journalist.

"*N'importe*," I replied. "But if they do, tell General Ducrot that the sentinel at the door was very kind to me, and that if he is made a prisoner, my father will take him at Cologne, and treat him well."

"My boy," said the English doctor, "do you know what has happened?"

"No, sir."

"Your Emperor has surrendered with eighty thousand men, who are on their way to Germany."

I rose from my straw and stood erect. I said one word three times in my injustice:—

"Dog, dog, dog!"

Then I lay down again, and dozed after they had gone. In the intervals of my dozing I tried to think. Could he not have died? Could he not have led us to death? Eighty thousand men! Where were Urich and Bazaine? Thank heaven, still threatening the enemy's lines of communication. Alas, I knew nothing, none of us did. So I dozed, and two ladies woke me up this time.

These ladies were obviously English by their accent. They were dressed in grey gowns, and had large red crosses on their breasts.

"How are you doing, sir?" said the taller.

"I am better, madam. Have the Germans violated the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium, and turned our right again?"

"No," said the shorter lady; "they have behaved perfectly well in that respect. They have, however, masked hopelessly both Bazaine and Urich. Paris must go, and at the same time you must drink this."

If I could love a Prussian, it would be Liebig; but he was not a Prussian, I think, but a Nassauan from Giessen. This short English lady gave me diluted Liebig with a little brandy in it, and made me feel a man again.

"Now, officer," said the taller lady; "please to show us your worst cases. Can you stand?"

"I can stand," I said; "but I am not in charge here. I will do all I can for you. You need not mind this man here, he is dead."

"Quite so," said the taller lady turning over his face, "would you be so kind as to close his eyes, my dear?" to the other lady. "This Turco is not dead, however; mind his knife, my love; remember the escape you had at Bazeilles."

I was thinking dreamily that English ladies must have a way of looking at things rather coolly, when a certain incident happened. As the taller lady was exhibiting Liebig and brandy to the Turco, I reeled and stumbled against the shorter lady. She caught hold of me, and laid me down in my original straw.

"Bother the dear boy, he is not fit to be moved," she remarked ;
"had not we better have her in, and make her see to him ?"

"I think so," said the tall lady ; "it is a nuisance that he can't be moved. This Turco here will make a mess of his leg, if we can't get this bullet out. I wonder where Dr. Kerkstone is ? Oh, here he is, and alone. Who on earth is to hold the arteries ?"

"I will do that," said the shorter lady.

And she did it, and I could give you her name, if she would allow me.

The taller lady called to the sentry, and said,

"Send in that French drummer-boy, if you please."

I saw a French drummer-boy in the door, and I wished him anywhere else, for I wanted a *Sœur de Charité* rather badly, and from what I heard I thought there was one near. However, a drummer was better than no one at all ; so, as he came to me, I merely lay quietly over, and I said,

"You will have to slit my tunic, and also my shirt, for I believe that I am bleeding again. Be so good as to ask the doctor to see to me when he has done with the others."

"Yes, sir."

I started. Was it Mark's brother ? No ; Mark had no brother. The drummer-boy came to me, and pulled out a knife to cut my tunic. Then he put his hand over my neck, and kissed me twice.

I turned in wrath ; the liberty was unpardonable. But in one instant the kisses which the drummer-boy had given me were paid back with interest.

For the drummer-boy was Marie—my own dear wife.

CHAPTER LI.

SHE had run away from Cologne, it seemed, to get to me. She had met these good English ladies at Luxemburg first, and had told them the whole truth about the matter. Had she stayed with them she could have got to me perfectly well, but at the passage of Prince Frederick Charles this simply happened, a thing which our brown-bearded journalist saw with his own eyes :—

A lady was sitting at the table d'hôte, when a foolish man came in from Thionville, and told us that the left of Bazaine was turned, and that the eleventh Chasseurs were cut to pieces. The

lady rose and left the room, her son was in that regiment. That the (then) left of Bazaine was turned, was perfectly true, but the eleventh Chasseurs were never engaged in the grand passage.

As this lady left the table, our journalist noticed that a pretty little woman rose and followed her. In a few minutes after, the journalist followed both of them, and found that they were going to Metz in an open carriage.

The little woman was Marie. She had run away from my father and mother, and was coming to me. My brown-bearded journalist wanted to get to Metz himself, and offered a large sum of money to the courier of the two ladies. The courier emphatically refused to take him at any price at all, and frankly informed the Englishman that he was a French spy and dared not. Jacques Cartier tells me that the Englishman offered him forty pounds sterling to get him through. "It was a great temptation to me," said Jacques; "but the thing had been done once or twice too often, and I had no particular wish to be hung, but I wanted to get Marie to you above all things, and to tell General Ducrot that they were respecting the frontier inexorably, and that if we could hold on by our left we were all right still."

Marie, as we lay in the straw, told me the rest. Jacques Cartier had got her on from one post to another, trying to get her to me, and trying to get himself to General Ducrot (a man he swears by). In seeking Ducrot he went too far to the right, and when he crossed the frontier for the third time, near Mézières, he found himself close to the Bavarians, at least so close as to be very unpleasant.

He was a man of resources; the 97th of the line was there, and he spoke to the Colonel.

"Sir, I must get to Ducrot. But I have a young lady with me, who says that she must see her husband."

"*Diantre!* I hope I may see my wife again," said the Colonel.

"Cannot you get her on to an ambulance as nurse?" said Jacques Cartier.

"There are none of the neutral ambulances within three miles," said the Colonel; "and we shall certainly fight to-morrow. It is not safe for any woman. Stay, I have a plan. Go and fetch the lady."

Marie was fetched.

"Madame," said the Colonel, "I understand that you wish to see your husband, who is on Ducrot's staff."

"Yes, sir; I wish to see him. I must see him. I have something to say to him."

"Madame, my wife has often much to say to me," said the

Colonel ; " and I have known her sit up till three o'clock in the morning to say it. But I doubt even for the sake of scolding me, that she would do what you *must* do if you intend to go on."

" What is that, Monsieur ? "

" To wear the clothes of a drummer."

" Mais, M'sieu ? "

" It is the only way, Madame. I can get you to the Geneva ambulance in that way, and in no other. With the ambulance I will trust you. You must, I think, go on now that you have come so far. But you must go in uniform. Do you consent ? "

Marie thought for an instant, and then said,

" Yes, I will see him ; though I think I shall see him dead."

" A good resolution. Now, my good lady, my time is precious. You will find a Sister of Charity below who will cut your hair off."

" My hair—oh, Monsieur ! "

" Madame, I cannot argue. My regiment will be engaged with the Bavarians to-morrow, and if you go at all you must march as a drummer-boy. Your plan is to get with the English ambulance. Give this note to the Sister of Charity downstairs, and she will attend to everything which you can want."

That was all. She went through it all to try and get to me. The two English ladies were preparing for their awful march on their two waggons, when they saw a beautiful boy running towards them.

" Ladies," said the boy, " I am not a young man, but I am a woman, and I want to see my husband."

In a moment she was in the straw of the waggon ; the rest is soon told. She hunted me until she found me. Then she lay in the straw beside me, and cared for my wounds.

CHAPTER LII.

SHE had not been long at my wounds, when there came suddenly into the barn a group of German officers, whom I knew *not* to be Prussians, because they took their shakos off when they saw our two English ladies. I recognised the foremost among them at once, it was the man whose life I saved in the battle of Sedan, and whose prisoner I was.

I whispered to Marie, "Keep quiet, darling, keep quiet! Hide that white cloak of mine. I fought that man."

Marie covered me as well as she could, and the tall German spoke to the two English ladies in English.

"I am the Prince of Hetmold, ladies. I have come here for a French officer with a white cloak lined with scarlet."

"We really cannot have our patients disturbed, your royal highness," said the taller lady; and the shorter lady said, "Certainly not."

"I do not want to disturb him, but I want to recognise him," said Prince Hetmold; and one of his staff said, "We want nothing but good."

"Well, here is a French officer in a white cloak lined with scarlet," said the taller lady; "he is the only one we have. See if he is your man. Madame, let the Prince see if it is the man he wants. He sha'n't be moved, and that is flat."

The Prince knelt over me, and we interchanged smiles. "Please do not move me," I said, "for I am very ill."

"You saved my life, and you are also my prisoner. What can I do for you?"

"Save me from going to Germany. I will not give my parole not to serve against the Germans in this war. I cannot do it. I wish that I could, but I cannot. I only ask to be left with her, for a very few months."

"With *her*! with whom?"

I pointed to Marie.

"He is a drummer-boy," said the Prince in amazement.

The English ladies bent and whispered to him a short time. He rose with his face flushed.

"You French beat us in romance. But I have no power. My hands are tied by Prussia. Can you make *no* terms, my Frenchman?"

Marie stood up and spoke. Her shako was off, and her hair was all gone; it had been cut off close to her skull, so that you could see the splendid shape of her head. She said, "Yes, he will make terms, this husband of mine. He will give his parole to go to Cologne with me till my baby is born. We go to his father and mother. We live quietly; and when the child is born he shall go; is that enough?"

"My dear lady," said the Prince, humbly, "will he not have a difficulty in leaving Prussia?"

"Not if the Prussians keep their word," said Marie.

"I will try to get those terms for you," said the Prince; "but really I am very, very doubtful."

"Try," said Marie.

"Try," said the two English ladies.

I must "try" to tell you the result in another chapter.

CHAPTER LIII.

THERE were present, Prussia, Saxony, Würtemberg, Baden, Nassau, Hanover, Bavaria, and Hetmold. None of the others were there, which was fortunate, because there would have been a worse row than there was, and as it was it was pretty bad. The whole row was about *me*.

I was the *casus belli*; that is to say, they had all been wanting something with which to blow off the steam of the united Fatherland, and they selected *me*. We French can squabble pretty well, and burn half Paris down in doing it; but the united Fatherland beats us in strong language. To gather the sentiments of a Saxon or Bavarian, Tyrolese or Prussian, is to get a very splendid lesson in Teutonic oaths.

We Latins can't swear to any great extent. I could write an essay on Teutonic oaths, but I should have to use so much bad language that I could not get it published. Ask, I repeat, a Southern German what he thinks of Prussia. I think that you would get a little bad language if you did so.

All these persons were at a village a very short distance beyond Sedan, on the Paris road.

It was the last time they met before they met at Versailles. Hetmold, it may be said, was notoriously the spokesman among the little German States, against the overwhelming hegemony of Prussia. He was a dear young fellow, good enough for a Frenchman. He began it. He told me that he intended to do so.

Hetmold said to Prussia, "Oh, a young French officer has saved my life, and I want to take him for my Xenos, and send him to his wife at Cologne."

"Has he given you his parole?" said Prussia.

"For three months only," answered Hetmold.

"Then I cannot allow it," said Prussia.

"But I request it," said Hetmold.

"And I refuse it," said Prussia.

"What right have you to refuse?" said Hetmold. "You have no crown on your head, as I have. Where would you

Prussians have been if we other German States had not been loyal to united Germany? And that does not mean Prussia, and never will."

"I agree with what you say," said Saxony, "but this is not the time to quarrel."

"I don't know that," broke out Bavaria. "We have had more than our fair share of the fighting, and so have you, Hetmold."

Nassau and Baden laughed approvingly. Baden whispered something to Württemberg, and Württemberg broke out laughing. Bavaria laughed also, and begged them to be quiet.

Saxony requested, before the discussion went farther, to ask what Hetmold's contingent was.

"9,400," said Hetmold.

"And you have lost?"

"2,800."

"And Prussia refuses to give you a single officer," said Saxony, at which Württemberg and Nassau laughed once more.

"Yes, I do," said Prussia. "I know who the officer is. He is a spy, and a Carbonaro."

"Prove it," said Hetmold.

"I can prove it very easily," said Prussia. "My cousin knows this gentleman perfectly well. He met him over the frontier in the Eifel with the most notorious spy in Europe, Jacques Cartier. Will that suffice you, Hetmold?"

"No!" said Hetmold, stoutly, "it will not suffice me. He refused to give his parole for a longer time than until his wound was healed and his child born. That man is no rascal and no spy, I will take my oath."

General murmurs of approval from Saxony, Württemberg, Baden, and Bavaria. Hanover knew nothing about Jacques Cartier, so he said nothing. Nassau knew Jacques Cartier perfectly well, because he had happened to employ him himself a short time before Sadowa. So he held his tongue.

"Jacques Cartier is his father's groom, or was rather," said Hetmold. "A mere boy may cross the frontier with his father's groom."

"Not at all," said Prussia, who declined to argue. "I will not give up this gentleman, unless he takes his parole like others."

"He won't do it, you see," said Bavaria. "We shall get a nice name in Europe if we carry on matters as we are now. Bazeilles will be a stink in my nostrils till I die."

"Why did you do it then? What forced you?"

"Your strategy. You knew it must be done. Why did you not do it yourselves?"

Prussia began to get very angry. Hetmold declares that when Bavaria said this, Prussia clapped his hand on his sword-hilt.

The smaller states and kingdoms were deeply interested. There was no doubt about Prussia's personal courage, and a duel between Prussia and Bavaria would have been a splendid incident in the war. They all hated Prussia like poison, but they loved Fatherland better.

Bavaria said, "I am not going to fight you, Prussia, but you are using the armies of the smaller States a great deal more freely than you have any right to do."

"Why?" said Prussia; "because you cannot find a general among you." (Which I think was hardly fair on von der Tann, if on no one else.) "What did the army of the Bund ever do? They could only fight when led by Prussians. This thing I will not do; I emphatically refuse to do it."

Nassau, a very excellent and amiable prince, had slipped away, for he saw that there would be more high words, as indeed there were. For the smaller States felt themselves deeply aggrieved by the part they had been made to play, and most extremely disliked the dictatorial tone of Prussia. On this occasion even the gentle Saxony, irritable like most poets, forgot himself, and said that if his father had known how his son was to be treated, not a man should have marched. Matters were growing to an unseemly squabble. Hetmold nailed his colours to the mast about me, not that he could have cared for me, but on principle, as representing the smallest of the small States. Prussia was quite cool, and would not yield an inch. Würtemberg and Saxony fell out, and had a private and nearly furious fracas between themselves, about some matter which Hetmold told me he should never find out to his dying day. Prussia thought he would try to get out of the argument with Bavaria and Baden, by making the peace between the two new combatants. The moment he attempted to do so they were the best friends in the world, and at last he had the whole of Germany at him, with the exception of the Austrian States and Nassau, and it was apparently all about *me*.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Nassau said, "The King." There was silence at once when he entered.

"I do not like him, I suppose I never shall; but he is an impressive man." Hetmold told me after, there was silence when he came in.

He said, "What is this of which Nassau tells me, Fritz?"

"Hetmold has been insolent to me, sire, and so has Bavaria; we are quarrelling in the face of the enemy, that is all."

"Instead of blessing God for the great victories He has given us. Oh, my children! my children!"

Your Dickens says that Mrs. Lupin had such a profound belief in Mr. Pecksniff, that if he had said to her "Seven times seven is forty-nine, my good soul," she would have treasured it as a great moral sentiment. I do not think myself, speaking as a Frenchman, and therefore strongly prejudiced, that the Emperor of Germany was a humbug or a Pecksniff at all. He had a great deal to thank God for in the name of his nation, and he was not ashamed of doing it. I like him for it. Every nation has its Te Deums on a victory. There is a service in your church for it. I don't blame the man, but I do wish that he would not do it in such a very Tartuffian way.

It is a strange thing the influence that a pure domestic blameless life and a continually increasing good fortune gives a man. The assembled princes had each one of them more real intellect in his little finger than Emperor William has in his whole body. Yet they were every one afraid of him. He calmed the storm in one instant.

"Fritz," said he, "my dear boy, let us hear clearly what is the matter."

"Hetmold," said Prussia, "desires me to give him up a young French officer, who refuses to give his parole for more than three months, until his wife is confined."

"Speak no more, Fritz, that is enough," and he sat down and wrote. Then beckoned to Hetmold, and whispered to him. He then wrote down my name, and had soon finished. This is the paper:—

"You are requested to let pass, into any part of the French lines he may choose, Captain Valentin Schneider, of the staff. He is the bearer of this.

"WILLIAM."

He handed this to the Prince of Hetmold, and said, "You should have come to me at first, Hetmold, instead of going to my Fritz. You take a great interest in this young French officer."

"Sire, he saved my life after I had taken him prisoner, and there is a story about him. He is married, and his wife has come on with some English ladies in the ambulance to be with him."

Touch a German on sentiment and he is your man. "Why was I not told this at first? Let him go as free as air," said Prussia.

"What is wrong with you, Bavaria?" said the Emperor.

"The same that is wrong with the other small States, your Majesty. Our men are being overworked. Ask Hetmold." Hetmold entirely agreed. He had lost 2,800 men out of 9,000.

"I will see to this, dear Bavaria, I will see to this. God bless you, my very dear children. Good-night."

He did see to it. He told von Moltke that several of the smaller States were recalcitrant, more particularly Hetmold and Bavaria. Von Moltke and another gentleman took this home to their hearts. Hetmold went home to his pleasant little principedom, when all was over, with 2,900 men, to be received in triumph certainly, with flowered arches and all that, but also with no less than 6,000 widows, orphans, and bereaved parents; and this to a man who dearly loved his people, and whose people loved him as dearly as they hated the Prussians (which is saying a great deal), was not very agreeable. As for the work which the Bavarians were set to do, after the dispute which arose about me, you had better ask von der Tann how many men he brought away from before Orleans.

CHAPTER LIV.

I WAS sitting beside Marie, in the sun, when the best of princes managed to get back through the still lying dead early in September. I saw him coming with one equerry, and as he came he waved his hand to me. He took out a paper, and gave it to me. It was my freedom.

I suppose that it was because I was wounded, that my breath came so short and thick. The Prince said to me,

"I should like to shake hands with Madame, the brave drummer; for I must ride far and fast. I fear you have cost me a thousand men."

I pointed to Marie, who was beside me, against the wall. He had not recognised her at all. The English ladies had given her a grey gown with a red cross on it, and no one would have known her again as the drummer-boy.

The Prince quickly kissed her hand.

"I would have asked for a lock of your hair," he said gallantly, "but you have not got half an inch to give me. The ladies are getting all the hair which they can buy. Soon, Madame, if you wear your hair in that becoming style, you will be in the fashion. Ladies will soon be like you—*en Zouave*. But how about your husband?"

"I want him to go to Cologne with——"

The Prince hesitated.

"Is that quite moral, Madame?" said the Prince.

"Would it not be immoral to do anything else?" said Marie.

"No; he is dismissed, and his country is being ruined. He has got a pass into the French lines as a dismissed prisoner, with full power to serve. We Germans understand his position perfectly well. I know what I should do, if I were his age."

"And what is that, sir?"

"I should wait here until these good Englishwomen had put me on my legs, and then I should pass into the French lines, and do what I could. Only mind, M. Schneider, that we are xenoi, and we never fight again."

And with these words he rode away.

But he turned and came back.

"Madame Schneider," he said, "can you find a flower for me?"

There was a snapdragon on the wall, and she gave it to him.

"May I have a kiss, Monsieur?" he said.

I looked at her, and saw that her eyes said yes.

He bent from his saddle and kissed her. Then he was gone. I was free, and Marie and I were alone in the sun together.

CHAPTER LV.

I FEAR you must think but very little of me, now. I think that you must hate me. Yet, pause—would you not have done the same thing?

I was absolutely free. Was I to cast that freedom to the winds for an idea? I think not. You may think differently, but I hold my own opinion. I had to serve France before all things in this world, and if I had a technical right to serve her, I had no possible excuse to dispense with that right.

I owed my freedom to the King of Prussia, but a German prince owed his life to me. It seemed to me a perfectly equal thing.

Let us, however, put to ourselves a perfectly parallel case, though an entirely impossible one, and see how *you* would judge me.

In 1882 England was invaded by the French. The Queen had been deceived by her ministers as to the state of her fleet and armies, and had declared war on a peculiarly foolish question, with their advice. The French, by some perfectly superhuman and inconceivable manœuvres, which can only be paralleled in Don Quixote, had tempted away the British fleet. The British fleet was in some place whither the human imagination cannot follow it. Two hundred ships of war, however, were entirely missing, with the exception of the *Glatton*, the *Hotspur*, and the *Devastation*, not intended to go to sea, and which do not intend to go to sea at all. The *Glatton* did not steam ten knots an hour, and disarranged the whole business. The Coastguard and Volunteers were all at Ascot Races, and so could do nothing. The men from Aldershot and Colchester were not telegraphed for, and consequently did not come. So the French landed, on a perfectly undefended coast, an army of 80,000 men, with a basis of operations only secured by the French fleet, every officer in which knew perfectly well they would go to the bottom of the sea when the English fleet returned, which it might do at any moment.

Meanwhile, also, the English Government had not abrogated the Treaty of Paris, and there was not the greatest mercantile navy in the world giving the very slightest opposition to French transports. There were not five hundred steamships, ranging from 1000 to 4000 tons, armed with one gun each, handled by first-class officers as easily as river-boats, cutting into the French transports in every direction. Also it is to be remarked in the *annus mirabilis* 1882, that the buoys were not removed, and torpedoes were *not* put in their place. A most remarkable fact!

Lord Westminster, Lord Salisbury, Lord Carnarvon, Lord Bute, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke Sutherland, men with money to lose, did nothing whatever. They did not send every horse out of their stables, every carriage and waggon they had, to form a commissariat for the Volunteers. In any other year every English gentleman would have done so, but this particular year of the invasion, nobody in England did what they had always done before, and would do again the next year. It was the *annus mirabilis*.

Let me pause, and have a laugh at the invasion of England. It is too entirely absurd. I have laughed, and I will go on now. But my head aches from laughing.

Though mind, you must spend your money, you must not stint that.

I proceed with my *annus mirabilis*. In this year the Queen got very frightened at the beginning, for the first time in her life. The southern farmers, who, as it is well known, have no horses, never moved their goods. The consequence was, that the French army lived upon Liebig's extract and hogs. You suggest bacon? Well, that shows your penetration. There was much bacon certainly, but in the *annus mirabilis* it was tainted with trichinites, and made our men ill. There was beef also, but the foot and mouth disease was bad in Kent that year, and so the beef disagreed with our men worse than the pork.

The British ministry were all very ill in consequence of drinking ginger-beer at Greenwich. Mr. Gladstone was very ill indeed, because he had to speak four hours fifty-nine minutes and three-quarters to his constituency, before he got one mouthful of dinner. Nobody did anything at all; it is entirely impossible to speak of the masterly way in which none of you did anything whatever. But none of you did anything; you had no troops, no militia, no artillery, and your fleet was at the Island of St. Borondon, in the Atlantic. For those reasons, we won the great, and now historical, battle of Dorking.

I was at that battle in a very prominent position; in fact, I wear the order of the Goose and Gander (instituted by our President, M. Mardi Prochaine) for my services there. I am of opinion, that if you had had any troops there, you would most certainly have won. As it was, you led us on, per ambages, until we saw your real line on Blackheath, where all the army were massing round the Queen.

Your artillery was right and left of us. I knew that it was all over as well as I did at Sedan. You, if you can remember as long ago as 1882, you will remember that I was captured in that cavalry charge by you. And you took me up to the Queen; and she said,

"Will you give your parole not to serve against the English?"

And I said,

"No; though I am married, your Majesty, I will not give that parole. Take me to Windsor dungeons."

"Let this officer go," said the Queen.

I went and fought again, and when our crowning disaster came at Farnham, I captured you; I let *you* go that time, for the sake of the best woman the world ever saw (that is, your Queen). I had a fight for you, you will remember, with Ducrot and Aurelles de Paladine; but you thought nothing of helping to hunt us back to the sea.

Be fair. I am only putting parallel cases. I conceived that I

was right, and I think so now. Something happened, however, which, to a certain extent, delayed me. I think that I should have gone before, for I was nearly well. Still Marie and I sat in the sun so pleasantly, that I thought I would wait a little longer.

She worked very well among the wounded, and then she came and sat, and read with me in the sun. And one night, I saw that she was ill, and I said :—

“ Let me get you a flower, darling ; will you have a lily ? ”

And she did a strange thing. She had learnt much English with these ladies, and they had lent her a book of Mr. Charles Kingsley's, and she quoted from it :—

“ The song told me so long, long ago,
How a maid she chose the white lily ;
But the bride she chose the red, red rose,
And by its thorn died she.”

I got her a rose, a Souvenir de Malmaison. But she got worse ; and I went in to the two English ladies.

The taller of the two looked at her, and she said,

“ Carry her in for us ; you had better sleep with that Chasseur to-night. Your arm will not want dressing ; keep his arm moist ; there is still some supuration.”

“ But what is the matter with Marie ? ” I asked.

“ Well,” said the taller English lady, “ you will be a father or a widower before to-morrow morning—possibly both.”

I went to bed as I was told, for I had full faith in those two ladies. I went to bed with the Chasseur, and at proper intervals watered his hand with a small English watering-pot. It was a damp business, and I, as a rule, prefer to sleep dry. *Mais que voulez vous ? La guerre, c'est toujours la guerre.* Also and furthermore, my bedfellow was a very strong young man, of the province of Brittany, and he stunk like all the—I beg a thousand pardons, it is my first *bêtise* ; he did not smell quite so nice as you do.

I object also, that the English ladies did not come to me as soon as they might have done. My Chasseur did not smell as Chasseurs—nay, as all of us—should. I was dozing off with a most grand theory of stinks in my head. I had nearly done the first volume, when I found that I was awakened by a woman. I immediately wrote a whole volume on smells. Then I rose in bed (I did not happen to have many clothes on), and the Chasseur cursed me violently in the Biscayan language, which I do not in the least degree understand.

I sat up in bed as far as decency would allow, and I saw the

taller English lady before me, with a naked child in her arms. With a wild recollection of a certain passage in Rabelais, I said,

"Madam, do you know what you are doing with the little infant?"

"Sir," she said, "this little baby is yours."

How I could possibly have launched into the world a small specimen of a man, who was so small that it would fit into the English lady's hand, I could not understand. I quite submitted. I saw my wife's eyes in his head, and I said,

"Give him to me."

"For an hour only you will remain," said the English lady.

So the Chasseur and I got the baby between us in bed. It was not very big, and we turned down the clothes, and let the baby play between us.

That it was the most astounding baby ever seen, I need not say. He—not born ten hours—put his little fingers into that Chasseur's beard, in a way which would astonish you. It does not much matter, however.

In the middle of the night I had to take the child across the road, and lay it to Marie's breast.

When you have done that, you have done most things. Well, I am going to conclude. I cannot say how sorry I am to part with you, but one man does not happen to be ten (this is exactly the place to say that Wellington said that Napoleon was 80,000 men. This is exactly the place to begin the argument. I assert that I am not ten men, but that Wellington was quite right in saying that Napoleon was 80,000. In my opinion he was more). I only say that I am not by any means ten men. If I had been, I should have told you all about the affray before Orleans.

I was with Marie for a month after the baby was born. I was absolutely free, and I did not leave her till I was fit to go. Then I went to D'Aurelles de Paladine, and he sent me south to meet Ricciotti Garibaldi at Dijon.

I met Ricciotti Garibaldi in England, and he said to me quite what I knew before. The French was utterly demoralised. They could not meet the Germans. They went out of the end of a field as soon as the Germans came in at the other end. "We could not make them fight," said Ricciotti to me; "and if the family of Garibaldi can't make men fight, who can?"

Let me lay down on the grave of a dead man one little wreath. I am an Orleanist. I love the name of the family. I would go to the devil for the Duc d'Aumale, and as I write the news comes to me that the Duc de Guise is dead. Is God going to plague us

for ever for the sins of that scoundrel Orleans? Why does God smite the first-born of France like this? What have we done, I beg of you? It seems to me, speaking as an Orleanist, that God is not just to France. He took the Prince de Condé, now He takes the Duc de Guise. Is God going to stamp France into the dirt?

Marie says "No." He is going to do nothing of the kind. She says that there will rise a regenerated France, under the house of Orleans, at the sound of whose mouth all the earth will tremble. And Marie says also a very strange thing. She says that no nation will trust France again.

I asked why France was not to be trusted again.

"Because she has the Revolution behind her; and no nation dare face a revolution save England."

"Why England?"

"Because England has done her duty by the people, and the Queen has helped her.

She had her ideas, this young woman.

I beg you to observe that under the Emperor of Germany's own signature I was no prisoner. Hetmold did his spiriting well. I was in Metz before the capitulation: and what is more to the purpose, I got out of it *before* the capitulation, with intelligence. Oh, my dear von Alvenstein, I wonder what you would say to *that*. Dear von Alvenstein, you don't in the least degree think it possible that a young Alsatian who could talk German as well as yourself, would strip a young drummer who happened to be accidentally dead, and put on his clothes; you never thought of that, General von Alvenstein. But I did that same thing, and the place where I did it was within ten minutes' walk of Malmaison.

When everything came to an end before Orleans, I fancied myself a lost man. Three years in Prussia was the least thing I had to undergo.

I beg to remark to you that my parole was given without my asking for it. Now I was ordered to Sedan, and to Sedan I went.

"Is my father's house standing?" I said to La Rose, of the "Europe."

"It is standing, and your father's there," said La Rose.

I went out. The wrong had been righted. One had died since the battle; so what did it matter? I went to my own father's house, and knocked.

The door was opened by my own wife. Oh, that pressure of breast to breast! It seemed to me now that the child had come, there was a new love more glorious than the old one. We were in one another's arms for one moment only.

I heard my father say, "Let them be alone together for a little," and then I heard a furious knocking at the door, just when my wife's bosom was on my breast.

I opened it. Mère Mathilde and Jacques Cartier were there, pursued, they said, by the Carbonari. While I was parleying with them, the door still open, a wounded wolf dashed in among us as we stood in the hall, and looking round upon us came and lay at my feet.

Marie said to me, "Oh, Valentin, the poor dog is dead."

"The wolf to the wehrwolf," said Mère Mathilde; "save us, save us, in God's name."

They were suddenly upon us like fiends. The Prussians were not within a quarter of a mile. It was a matter for revolvers, and we were unarmed. I fought like a Frenchman, with a poker, and Jacques Cartier did all he could; but this deadly sin of *talking* had been committed by us against the Carbonari, and we were doomed. Mère Mathilde fell wounded first, and then my mother went down. My father wrested a revolver from a man before we were hunted into the dining-room, and found five barrels loaded. Jacques Cartier fought with a chair. My father did splendid service by carefully shooting five men, but his valour was of no use, for he was shot himself, and very dangerously. Jacques Cartier was hit twice. All was going badly with us, and Marie had suddenly given me what she thought was the last kiss in this world, when we heard that awful—

HALT !

It was the Prussians. The Carbonari were hemmed into the hall, and a volley was poured in on them. When the volley had had its effect, the Prussians ran in. My father was confronted by a solemn young officer in his own dining-room.

"You keep pretty order in the conquered provinces, sir," said my father.

"We cannot undertake to keep order with the Carbonari, sir."

"I suppose not, sir. But my wife is killed in consequence of your negligence."

"Gott im Himmel!" said the young officer. "Let us look, dear M. Schneider."

Mère Mathilde was not dead, nor was my mother. She was shot through the thigh and through the deltoid muscles, but she was not dead at all. In fact, she is alive now.

One ugly thing happened at the very last. One of the wounded

Carbonari had been disarmed by the Prussians, but he had a little American pistol concealed on him. Jacques Cartier approached him to give him some water, and he said, "Foul hound and traitor," and he shot him so that he maimed him for life.

That is all I have to say of Sedan.

NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE OF RHYADER AND FESTINIOG.

THE two sons of the old house of Rhyader developed singularly different dispositions, though both gave great cause of anxiety to their father, at one time. Scarcely divided by one year in age, they were as distant as the poles, both in pursuits and in character. Gervase, the elder, began life as a solemn and pensive baby, who at his christening attended cautiously to the ceremony, as if to see that it was correctly done in every particular. Shortly afterwards he became a precocious boy and wrote some admirable poetry. Not long afterwards he became a precocious young man, with all the learning of the Egyptians at his fingers' ends. He was a young gentleman of great promise, and although his performances never came up to his promises, he was an all too excellent young gentleman. His inexorable virtues led him at one time it was suspected Romewards, but he never went; he never did anything incautious.

Iltyd, the younger son, was, on the other hand, a violent baby, a violent and, as some said, a stupid boy, and a most headstrong young man. The mother died not long after Iltyd had attained his tenth year, leaving the head of the house a widower; and after that event no one could do anything with the younger son, save his father and his brother. To these two people, and to these alone (save possibly the colonel of his regiment when he chose), would he listen. The father and brother, who were both crazy about their pedigree, were proud of him. The father would say, "He is a real De Barri, the inexorable spirit of Giraldu Cambrensis is alive in *him*;" and the brother would say, "It is true; he may do us honour in war; it is a pity we ever took the name

of Arnaud, and allowed the Irish Barrys to usurp our real honours."

Iltyd Gerald Baldwin Arnaud, christened carefully after the Saint, the Archdeacon and the Archbishop, cast the traditions of his family to the winds, and voted Giraldus Cambrensis the greatest bore of all the Barris. The great Rhys he pronounced to be a noodle, inasmuch as he could not keep his own kingdom; and he very much affected the company of one Halfacre, a groom, who, he declared, was a descendant of Halfager, and consequently a prince in disguise. Iltyd was sent into the army very young, and was a most excellent young officer, though he got into early trouble by incontinence of speech. The colonel of his regiment having incautiously remarked that his family had come over with the Conqueror, Iltyd said, "You pack of rascals were a little too late, we came over with the FitzGeralds in the time of Edward the Confessor." He was a foolish young man, and was rebuked most properly. He would laugh at his own pedigree, but only in his own family.

As the brothers Gervase and Iltyd grew to manhood, one seemed to give to the other what was wanted by each. Gervase over-read himself, and pushed his religion to the verge of extreme asceticism; Iltyd, on the other hand, would come home on leave from his regiment and tear Gervase from his study, carrying him over hill, moor, and torrent, up to some nook among the wild Welsh mountains, where they could hear no sound save the distant trickling of waters. Then Iltyd would tell Gervase all about the strange magnificence of London and Paris: and how he, whose short curls were now lying on his brother's shoulder, had yesterday been at court; and how the pale man that he had been trying to describe was the Emperor, and the boy was the Prince of Wales, and so on; trying to fix the colours and forms of a kaleidoscope to suit the eye of his brother, to whom, at this time, all these people were mere names.

Then they would wander down to the old priory in the hollow, so dearly beloved by the greatest of their family, and among the shattered Norman and early English arches, Gervase would talk about the crusade preached by Giraldus Cambrensis and Baldwin in that spot, until Iltyd would catch his enthusiasm, and believe that the campaign which was now imminent was, in reality, another crusade to snatch the holy places from the hands of an alien and, in reality, barbarous power. Then they would go back to the castle, and their father would say, as he saw them coming home arm in arm, "nothing will separate those two, *except a woman.*"

The war came, blazed up, burnt low, blazed up again, and then died out. Ilyd was all through it and behaved with credit and distinction : he came home a captain, but, being in the Guards, with, of course, the title of colonel. But meanwhile something had happened to the branch of the Barri family which had never been calculated on for a moment.

The head of the Festiniog family lost his eldest son by typhoid fever, and before he had time to reflect on the matter, news came that his last surviving son was killed in the trenches. The head of the Rhyaders, the father of our two young gentlemen, at once went to give such consolation to his cousin as he could ; and he urged him strongly to marry again. The old man, with the obstinacy of the Rhys family crossed through endless generations with that of the De Barris, had a will of his own. He said that the hand of God was in it, that the Festiniog estates must join those of Rhyader, and that the latter house had two noble sons to represent the allied families. Instead of marrying, he made his will, and by no means too soon, for he died very shortly afterwards, leaving, out of his personal property, seven thousand pounds to Ilyd, as a memorial of his gallantry in war.

The Rhyaders, therefore, from being merely, as the Irish say, "decent" people, that is to say very rich, became immensely so. Rhyader took the title of Festiniog, and became a pillar of the State.

The Romish tendencies of Gervase, the elder of the two sons, gave the most dreadful trouble to his father. The entailed estates of the two branches of the family would most certainly come to Gervase.

Gervase (as was said by his friends) was actually thinking of joining the Roman priesthood, and openly talking about it. Had he done so, a large part of the vast revenues which had come to the Rhyader branch of the family would flow into the coffers of the Papacy. Llanavon would be restored, and monks would walk about among the violent Welsh dissenters to be stoned : to the new Lord Festiniog such a state of things appeared most horrible, for he was one of the most extreme of all Protestants. Yet he was afraid of his son, and he did not know what to do. He, in the end, had to do nothing at all ; affairs arranged themselves for him. Gervase, with his new honours fresh upon him, went to a ball at Powys Castle, to look, they said, for the last time, on the frivolities of this wicked world. Like many holy men, including Richelieu, he was an admirable dancer, and he danced that night so often with only one young lady, that the county raised their eyebrows, and listened to such of the conversation as they could

hear between the Festiniog heir and Miss Ormerod as hard as they could. In the interval of the dances they seemed to talk about nothing but religious matters, and the noise went abroad that Miss Ormerod was going to take the veil when Gervase took the cowl.

Such was by no means the fact. Gervase had fallen in love with Alice Ormerod the moment he saw her. She was so exceedingly beautiful and charming, that there would have been no wonder in the matter at all had it not been put about that Gervase had not only devoted his life to the secular Roman priesthood but even to the regular; the reality being that he was nothing more than a very High Churchman for those times, and had a peculiar and very strong antipathy to the Papacy.

Miss Ormerod held similar views, and, to the great delight of her father-in-law, very soon became the wife of Gervase.

Twelve months had not passed before she had an heir to the combined estates of Festiniog and Rhyader; but twelve months more had not passed before she was a hopeless, childless cripple, and active life was over for her in this world. Driving down one of the mountainous lanes near Llanavon, the pony took fright and became unmanageable. The nurse and child were thrown against a stone wall and killed; and Lady Rhyader, after trembling for a year between this world and the next, became an apparently hopeless invalid.

If Gervase had loved her before, he adored her now. The year during which he had dreaded to lose her had only rendered her more precious. The eight years which followed on that year had rendered her more precious still. Gervase Arnaud thought that he had made his mind up on every subject save one; and on that one point he could get no information whatever. His wife and he had every thought, every sentiment, every hope in common; but he wanted to know if there was any chance of their meeting after death. Rome said no, save under certain conditions, to which he would not submit. The Anglicans said, very properly, that they could not tell him. Neither the Irvingites nor the Swedenborgians satisfied him. A keen, shrewd man enough in most things, he had cast his lot in with one woman, and made himself foolish about her. The High Church people declined most properly to tell him more than they knew, and he went elsewhere. The last people he tried were the Moravians; they told him that if he thought so much of his wife he was unfit for bliss. In short, he could get no satisfaction at all on the subject of his meeting his wife in a future state. Spiritualism was not then, or he might have taken to *that*. After eight years it would have taken a Mosheim to say of what heresy he was innocent.

Possibly of none; any man who studies theology is the heretic of half an hour. A man who does not assimilate the various heresies one by one, wants genius, and is no true theologian. Gervase was a postulant to every heresy in ecclesiastical history for some time, but he came back to the High Church party after all.

His father, Lord Festiniog, had gone to Rome, and had written from there that he wished to see him. At this time his wife, Lady Rhyader, for the second title of Festiniog was the same as their old one, was hopeless. She was moved from the sofa to her bed, and back again. He left her in the most reluctant manner, for she had not stood upright for seven years. He saw his father at Rome, and then came back to Llanavon, after an absence of six weeks.

There had been a silence as regards letters between them, which will be explained immediately. He thought from this that she might be worse; that she could write to him no longer. He got no word from her at all; he dared not go to his own home at Llanavon, for the servants might tell him she was dead.

He got out of the train at Llanganfraid and went across the mountains. After a long walk he came in sight of the castle, and everything seemed as usual. He looked on the terrace, and he saw her invalid chair there, with the rugs and shawls upon it, but it was empty.

He did not know what to think. He dashed from rock to rock. Space and time seemed to be annihilated. Here was the chair in which he had left her, a hopeless invalid; here was her fan, here were the letters from her friends strewed around; here were the prints of her sacred feet on the cushion, but where was she?

"Alice! Alice!" he called aloud, "where are you?"

"Gervase! Gervase!" answered a clear, strong voice from the shrubbery close by. "I am here; come to me, darling."

He ran into the thicket close by, and there was his wife, more beautiful than ever. She told him the truth at once.

"First I found that I could stand, and then I found that I could walk; but I thought that I would say nothing about it to any one. I should not even have told you, had you not surprised me in this way; during the last fortnight I must have walked miles."

"But have you never asked Doctor W——," said Gervase.

"No! I do not think he knows his business at all. I shall be able to walk with you again now; I shall soon get stronger, I am sure. We can go over the hills together as of old. We shall be together as we once hoped to be."

It now becomes necessary to leave Gervase in his new honeymoon, and follow Iltyd. The fact must be told at once; after the war he had done little good for himself or others. He had very nearly quarrelled with his father and his brother, and was in their bad books. He had lost some money at horse-racing, a thing which has been done before. He had also run away with a young milliner from the West-end, which was bad; and was reported to have married her at the consulate at Leghorn, which was considered in certain circles to be worse. After having fulfilled the catalogue of his crimes he died. Some people were very sorry for him—the commander-in-chief was, his father was; while his brother Gervase would have given half his income to get him back again; but unfortunately he was dead, and so sorrow was not of the least avail; no more, in short, than it would be in your case or in our own.

The sorrow of two people only took practical results. Lord Festiniog held consultation with his son Gervase. They determined that "the woman" and her child, just born, should not suffer, in a pecuniary point of view.

This determination was made just after the birth of Gervase's first child; before the accident which made the now great house heirless. It was persevered in, most faithfully as far as "the woman" was concerned for many years, until after the time when Gervase's second child, the one born after his wife's recovery, was a boy of fourteen.

The poor woman had from the first accepted her position most humbly: she thanked Lord Festiniog and Lord Rhyader most heartily for their assistance, pointed out frankly to the family that she had six thousand pounds left her by her husband, and needed nothing except the future help of the family for the education of her little boy. Every promise was given, and of course no objection was made to her request to live abroad at Leghorn, near the grave of Iltyd; it was the best for all parties. No objection was made either to her supplementing her income by her trade: in fact, they never knew that she was doing so.

She lived in great retirement with her child in Leghorn, and she was more than once seen there by the family solicitor, young Mr. Drummond, who generally spent part of the long vacation there. He gave the most excellent account of her beauty, her character, and her accomplishments, and spoke so much about her, that one day Lord Festiniog turned from some papers which he was examining, and said,

"Drummond, if you have really any honourable intentions towards the poor woman, tell me so. Our family have done her

the most irreparable wrong ; if you think of marrying her, I will most certainly make her a very handsome settlement."

"My lord," he replied, "there are insuperable objections."

"Nonsense, man, none but what may be got over with time."

"I mean on my side, my lord."

"Pray forgive me ; I ought not to have mentioned the subject ; only you spoke of her with such enthusiasm and admiration, that you cannot blame me."

"I do not, my lord ; but the strict truth is that before I knew my own mind I formed other ties."

"I never heard of that."

"Nor do I wish others to do so. I only mentioned the fact to account for my conduct."

"Then it is your duty surely to keep away from her, is it not ?"

"I assure you that there is not any danger, less than you could possibly dream of. Mrs. Arnaud, as she calls herself, is my friend, but she never could be anything more."

Lord Festiniog pretended to be satisfied, but he was very far from being so. He put the matter aside as being no particular business of his, though he thought that the cool Drummond was one of the last men to make a foolish and clandestine marriage. Still he reflected that if one half of the world knew half of the follies committed by the other half, society would become impossible.

Drummond saw Mrs. Arnaud every summer for some years, and did her many little services. One summer when he went, he found that she was at Ravenna, and followed her there, only to find her startlingly ill in a rather secluded lodging by the sea. She explained to him that she had only come there for the boy's sake, for that he wanted a little change, and her servant had told her that Ravenna was particularly healthy. "The woman had been born there," she said.

Drummond was very angry and loud about the matter. "The woman wants to come here after her people, I suppose—confound her. It is one of the worst fever holes in Europe. You should come away at once."

"I should like to do so, I am sure," she said ; "but I feel too ill to move." And indeed she seemed so. Drummond went away after her servant, and came back telling her that he had scolded the woman, that she was going to be ill, and that there was no danger.

It appears that the woman deceived them on that point ; Mrs. Arnaud was very ill indeed, and Drummond was evidently terrified. The woman Carlina told him that she would be delirious for a

few days. She became so, and sunk into a lethargy ; once she seemed so nearly gone that he said to Carlina, in a way very different from his ordinary business one, " if she dies, I will kill you."

She did not die, she lingered on into a slow return to consciousness. She asked for her child, but she was told that it was dangerous for him to come near her. The necessity for breaking the truth to her came at last. The child had caught the fever from her and had died.

She relapsed into delirium, and imbecility for a time. The first day she was in good health enough to travel she insisted on going straight to England as soon as she had put a stone on the grave of the boy. She was perfectly resolute about it, though Drummond rather urged her not to undertake the journey. Nothing could turn her, and to England she came in his company ; and went straight to Lord Festiniog, asking his protection : he saw no reason why he should not grant it, and so gave his consent, which was by no means necessary, to her entering a society of religious ladies which had become known to his eccentric son in one of his religious experiments. Here she lived for some years unmolested, and almost happy. Her dead child was always before her certainly : but he was in heaven, so she thought how wicked it was for her to mourn for him. He could not always have been a child, but must have grown to be a man. And although her husband Iltyd was a saint, still all men were not satisfactory. He might have grown into a Drummond, and that would not have pleased her, kind as he was.

Lord Rhyader and his very charming wife frequently saw her ; her guilt was so apparently innocent that they thought of it very little. Once Lord Rhyader, in one of his religious moods, spoke to her about it, and expressed himself glad to see how entirely she had repented.

" My guilt ! " she said ; " I am not guilty. My poor saint, Iltyd, made a most innocent mistake. That is all. You must not use that word again to me, my lord ; " and she rose and looked at him in a way he did not like.

" Come," he said, " do not call me my lord, call me Gervase : do not let us quarrel. Are you happy here ? "

" Yes. I shall go into the world no more, I think. My mother and the rest of my relations left me soon after— Well, you know what I mean."

" So I understood," said Lord Rhyader. " You have, I suppose, given the money you have to the sisterhood. Not that I am likely to care about it, but if you have made any deed of gift in

this direction, you might feel yourself, as it were, bound to stay here. If you desire to go once more into the world, I assure you that we will take the greatest care that you have ample means : even in case of your marrying again."

"That is very nobly said, Gervase," she replied ; " but I have kept what money I have entirely in my own hands."

"Then you will not be beholden to us in any way ? "

"If it becomes necessary, yes ; at present, no." And on these terms they remained.

Her money was part of it laid out in mortgage, and one of her mortgagers died. Her lawyer, who had been her husband's, was no other than her old friend Drummond. It was necessary that she should go to London and see him.

CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN TO THE WORLD.

YEARS had passed since she had seen Drummond, and years had passed since she had been in London. She had heard from him formally many times, and on one or two occasions confidentially. But as far as she was concerned he belonged to the past, and she supposed that he had entirely forgotten the passion which he had once undoubtedly entertained for her.

She approached his office with a feeling of curiosity. What was he like now ? She thought he was a handsome fellow once, though never comparable to Iltyd. "However, he played the villain to me ; he pestered me with his attentions, and I only found out from Lord Festiniog that he was married all the time. If my lord knew that, what a rage he would be in ! I will never tell the truth about that, for the man was very kind to me when my boy died. He was very agreeable, and I think that I could have trusted him once ; I certainly cannot now."

She went into his front office in Westminster, and sent in her name. No client was with him, and she was asked in at once. She passed into the room a handsome woman of less than forty ; she came out, the clerks noticed, looking much older.

He was little altered, as she saw at once when he rose to receive her. He held out his hand and said, "Mary" ; but she replied, "Mrs. Arnaud, if you please." The clerks heard no

more. What passed between them is a mere matter of detail : no one knew, in fact, until long afterwards.

Her last words, however, as she was leaving, were perfectly audible. "You are certainly right, and I see it now. I thank you, though I never can reward you in the way you desire. You have done Iltyd's memory a great service. Could he know of it he would thank you as deeply as I do. I will vindicate his memory in my own way. Meanwhile, I will entirely keep your counsel for the sake of old times. Depend completely on that."

Mrs. Arnaud never went back to the religious house where she had lived so happily. She stayed in London, and entered into a long and acrimonious correspondence with Lord Festiniog. They both lost their tempers over the matter, and at last he said that she might carry out her threat and go to anywhere her own way.

She did so, and from this moment our story as regards her really begins. She was determined to live without the countenance of the family any longer. She will explain her reasons herself hereafter.

She consulted Drummond as to the best way of doing so. He at once told her of an excellent investment at No. 17, Hartley Street, Cavendish Square. It was a fashionable milliner's business which she could conduct herself most perfectly, and which was for sale by private contract. He had known of the fact through his own son being a lodger in the house.

"Your son," she said.

"Yes," he said ; "I have not brought him up to the law. He is in the Home Office ; a poor appointment as yet. You have heard, surely, how painful my married life was ?"

"Yes, Lord Festiniog told me some of it."

"Well, I love the young man, and he is devoted to me, but he has at times a look so fearfully like his mother that I dread to look at him. I could not have him sitting opposite me in the office all day, and every day. I should never forget the past. You can understand *that*, my dear Mrs. Arnaud."

"Well indeed," said Mrs. Arnaud, "the past has not been very happy for either of us. You, however, have had most to bear. I earnestly hope, Mr. Drummond, that the presence of your son in my house will not cause us to meet oftener than courtesy permits."

"You persist in your difficult resolution."

"Yes."

"Well, do not mention my name."

"I will certainly not do so."

And so Mrs. Arnaud began life once more on her own account.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. ARNAUD.

To be entirely alone in a strange house, after making a great resolution and carrying it out to the end : after doing a thing which was terrifying to think of before it was done, and when accomplished was more fearful still ; was not by any means a reassuring position. Mrs. Arnaud felt that as she sat down in her little dark back parlour and thought of the past and of the future. She had taken the great step of her life, and was by herself, for the first time, face to face with facts.

She was at this time about forty, looking about five-and-twenty : complexion and features were still perfect, and her vast mass of dark hair, gathered behind and falling in a large curl over her left shoulder, was untouched with grey : she wore over it a small lace cap ; from the throat downwards fell a long white shawl of the same material, and her gown was of dark purple silk. Possibly there was not in the West End of London that summer's evening a handsomer or more perfectly dressed woman than Mrs. Arnaud, of No. 17, Hartley Street, Cavendish Square, milliner and dress-maker.

She had come back at last to her old trade, which had been her mother's before her. After many years' seclusion as a religious lady, she had once more thrust herself before the public in fulfilment of a certain threat, and she was utterly alone in her terror : she had sent out her maid Rachel, and there was no movement in the house except the ticking of the French clock on the mantelpiece. She opened the door leading to the shop and looked in : it was nearly dark, for the shutters were up, but was set out ready for the morrow, when she would open it. It was full of ghostly female figures, in splendid dim-seen raiment, but without heads. Two of them nearest the window, in her sickly fancy, seemed like Marie Antoinette and the Princess de Lamballe risen from the dead. To-morrow morning the shutters would be down, and the garish sunshine would be in the place ; she herself would have to take her place among the headless images, herself the best dressed among them all. On the dreadful morrow every noodle in London would have the right of staring at the beautiful Mrs. Arnaud, and would discuss her history unfavourably to herself. And although she wished that the morrow was come, and that her torture was begun, the present solitude was almost too horrible to be borne.

One of the bravest men in the world, a non-combatant, said to

us once, about the battle of the Alma, that he was more frightened at the beginning of that battle than ever he had been since he went in for *vivá voce* in his little-go. Our friend was not easily frightened, any more than was Mrs. Arnaud. Still Mrs. Arnaud was in a state of nervous terror difficult to be conceived. She kept on saying to herself, "If he were to come now, when Rachel is away and I am alone, I should go out of my mind. And he is in town, and might take it into his head to come. What on earth should I do then?" She sat down again and waited, with her heart in her mouth, for every footfall.

What could Lord Rhyader have done to her if he *had* come? She never asked herself that question: an all too blameless nobleman, devoted to his country's good, a man who would have died sooner than say a rude word to a costermonger's wife; what had she to fear from *him*? He was not likely to murder her; had he done so, her troubles would have been over for ever, and he would have fallen a victim to the outraged laws of the British Empire; two results, which in her present state of mind she could have regarded with quiet satisfaction. Why should she, therefore, be so dreadfully afraid of Lord Rhyader?

She was so afraid of his coming and finding her alone, however, that she could not sit still; she wandered out from the little back parlour through the door which connected it with the hall. Here she found something which distracted her thoughts for a short time. She had not only bought the dressmaking business of her predecessor, but she had bought the lease of the house, and the lodgers also. She had got a categorical description of those lodgers, but she had never seen any of them, for it was her first evening in the house: according to her predecessor, they were the best lodgers ever seen: giving no earthly trouble and paying like clockwork. It suddenly struck her that her new servants had not arrived, that her lodgers were still out, and that it would be quite as well to go through their rooms and see that all was comfortable for them. The new servants were to come at night; Rachel would not be home before that time and would probably be cross; so she went upstairs with a candle, and with a new anxiety left her fright behind her for a short time.

The first floor, directly over the shop, was so large, that she lit the Honourable Algernon D'Arcy's gas for him, and then looked round his room, or rather her own. He was a young guardsman, she knew, so she was bound to love him, and assist him in every way, as a soldier's widow. After a very carefully carried out examination of his rooms, and such of his papers as were lying about, she was forced to conclude that he had not so much as learnt the grammar

of art, and had turned his genius principally to mathematics. His oleographs and chromolithographs were neither well selected nor well arranged; and as for the mathematical papers which were strewn about, she argued from the frequent corrections that it would take Mrs. Somerville and Sir John Herschel to set them right again. That he was an extremely diligent officer she had heard from her predecessor, but she left his room with the impression that he was cramming with an insufficient education. That he desired to be married to a religious young lady, and that there were temporary difficulties in the way, she discovered before she had been in the room ten minutes. We can no more tell how she did so than we can tell how a laden bee knows the way home, or how she discovered that he was careless with his money, and that his mother was dead. She, however, made all these discoveries before she left his room and went up to the second floor, saying to herself, "Poor fellow, he wants looking after, I will treat him as though he were my own lost boy."

The second floor was in the occupation of Mr. George Drummond, the lawyer's son and heir, a young clerk in the Home Office. His æsthetic tastes seemed to be superior to Mr. D'Arcy's, and his habits more methodical; his solitary picture was an artist's proof of Holman Hunt's "Finding in the Temple," and altogether he seemed a methodical person; none of his papers were lying about; his pipes were arranged in racks over the mantel-piece, and on either side were two japanned receptacles, like those in an office, one marked "bills paid," and the other "bills unpaid"; the former was full, the latter was empty; Mr. D'Arcy below had no such arrangement, and Mrs. Arnaud thought that Mr. Drummond would be an excellent lodger, who would require no taking care of, as he seemed perfectly able to take care of himself. He was evidently the sort of person she disliked heartily, the very arrangement of his books in his bedroom offended her; he must have put them right himself that morning, for there was no one else to do it: they were there in a row, just as if an idle valet had placed them. She took a dislike to Mr. Drummond, and a very strong liking for Mr. D'Arcy, "Yet," she thought, "it is unfair to remember who his father was."

Then she went downstairs again, and as she went looked into D'Arcy's room, and sat down in his easy chair for a time. Then she found herself in the hall, with the light playing in over the door, and she knew that she must go back again alone into her solitude.

There was a swift foot upon the steps, and for an instant she remained paralysed with the idea that it was Lord Rhyader. She

might have reassured herself had she had time to think, for whatever powers Lord Rhyader had over her, he had certainly not got the latch-key of her house. The new-comer had, and used it with familiarity; the door was open for a moment and she saw a tall figure against the evening sky. Then the door was shut, and she was in semi-darkness with a man.

"To whom have I the honour of——" said Mrs. Arnaud.

"George Drummond," said a pleasant voice. "I suppose you are Mrs. Arnaud."

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. ARNAUD'S DEFIANCE.

It was rather an unfortunate introduction between these two people, for at the sound of George Drummond's voice she grew faint, and asked him to give her his arm. He did so at once, of course, and led her into the parlour behind the shop. She sat down on the sofa, and George Drummond would possibly have asked her how she felt, but at that moment there came a thundering knock at the door.

Mrs. Arnaud started up at once. "There he is," she said: "Mr. Drummond, I charge you not to leave me alone with that man."

"Certainly not," said George Drummond, "but what is the man's name?"

"Lord Rhyader," said Mrs. Arnaud. "If I am left alone with him there will be mischief."

"Lord Rhyader!" said George Drummond: "why, I know him very well. What makes you afraid of him?"

"No matter," said Mrs. Arnaud, "you stay with me, that is all."

"I will stay with you, certainly," said George Drummond; "but when is your servant going to open the door?"

"My servants are all out," said Mrs. Arnaud. "Heavens, he is knocking again."

"Let me go and open the door," said George Drummond.

"If you are not afraid," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"Who was ever afraid of Lord Rhyader?" he said; and while she lit the candle, he went and opened the door, so they came in together.

He was by no means a terrible looking person, being of peaceful aspect, about forty-five, wearing spectacles, and mutton-chop whiskers. Had you met him in the street you would have taken him for a successful barrister, a thing which he probably would have been had he not been possessed of fifty thousand a year in prospect. His first words as he came before George Drummond were, "My dear Mary, what insanity is this?"

"Gervase," she said, trembling and pale, "you have brought it on yourself, and you see the results. Allow me to observe that there is a third person in the room, a stranger to me at all events, though his father was none."

Lord Rhyader turned and saw George Drummond. "Why, Drummond!" he exclaimed, with unfeigned astonishment, "what brings you here?"

"I might ask you the same question, with the same look of amazement, Lord Rhyader," said George Drummond, laughing, "only Mrs. Arnaud, whom I found alone in the house, told me whom I was to expect. The mystery on my part is easily solved, I am Mrs. Arnaud's lodger."

"I did not know you had moved," said Lord Rhyader. "I am very anxious to see Mrs. Arnaud alone. Nay, Mary, I will: sooner or later we must have an explanation. Why not have it over at once?"

"You had better go, Mr. Drummond," said Mrs. Arnaud, quietly; and he went.

Lord Rhyader sat opposite to Mrs. Arnaud silent for half a minute, until he saw that he would have to speak first; he did so.

"This is scarcely fair, Mary."

"I do not know what you mean, Gervase."

"I think you do, for you have accepted my protection and that of Lady Rhyader for some years now, and acquiesced in your real position, which I confess was a very painful one."

"I never acquiesced in my real position; I consented to a false one, for the sake of one who is lost. Now that I know the truth, I withdraw from my former situation, and prove him to be an honourable man."

Her courage was coming back to her rapidly now. The terror of this interview and this explanation had nearly driven her mad; here it had come: here she was face to face with facts, and she was not in the least degree frightened. How completely absurd artificial terrors are, and yet how terrible until they are faced. The thing had come on her, the anticipation of which had made her half crazy, and she was almost laughing over her winning hand. He had played his last card. He could do nothing more

than he had done. He was entirely powerless. What a fool she thought herself for ever having been frightened.

"Mary," he said, "will you listen to reason?"

"Yes."

"Will you allow me to go through the facts of our relations, like a lawyer?"

"Certainly. I shall correct you when you err, however."

"Good," said Lord Rhyader: "My poor brother grossly deceived himself and you by inducing you and himself also to believe that you were married to him. Such you know was not the fact."

"Such, I know, now, *was* the fact. Lord Festiniog and yourself could have known it had you cared to do so. I was married at the consulate at Leghorn, but I was told afterwards that the marriage was illegal. I believed it, whereas, Gervase, you know that I am as honestly married as you are."

"Have you the proofs?"

"Yes, I certainly have. Otherwise I should never have had painted up over my shop door 'The Honourable Mrs. Arnaud.'"

"Mary, you have never done that!"

"Take the candle out into the street, and look for yourself, Gervase. You will see that I have done it; and I told your father that I would, and I have, and it will bring custom to me, and annoyance to Lord Festiniog."

"Why do you wish to annoy my father? He has been very kind to you."

"Kind! I am beholden to him for nothing, and after I have put the proofs of my marriage in his hand, he still hesitates to recognise me."

"Then this is the dreadful quarrel between you two, of which he has spoken since I came from France."

"I suppose so. It is a matter of indifference to me if it is or not. He knows that I could put my legal claims to be his daughter-in-law before any court of equity in the land, were it worth my while, which it is not, for I have no children. I offer to prove that your brother Iltyd was an honourable man; he tries to prevent me, and leave your brother's memory with the stain of villainy upon it. Iltyd was no villain, and I will not have him called so, even by his own father. What is the use of discussing the matter further; your father has defied me, and the consequence is that I have had 'The Honourable Mrs. Arnaud' painted up over my shop."

"But, Mary, supposing all this to be true, why do you irritate my father so?"

"Why does he irritate me?" was her answer. "He has refused to acknowledge me. Besides, what is the use of talking over the matter; the thing is done, and all London will see it to-morrow."

"It will kill my father," said Lord Rhyader.

"What nonsense people in your position can talk, when they give their minds to it. It will kill him, you say, to have his favourite son's innocence proved to the world. I, however, am not afraid of *him*."

"I fear you are afraid of no one, Mary."

"Yes. It is odd, but I am afraid of you. At times only, mind, but still sometimes."

"At what times are those?"

"We have talked enough," she replied. "I am not afraid of you now, brother-in-law, at all events. I am your sister-in-law, and you cannot disprove it. Ah, you may wince, but you cannot. Take my defiance to Lord Festiniog, and tell him that if he will freely do what I could force him to do, acknowledge that his son was not a villain, I will paint out my own name over the shop window, and paint in my niece's, for she is my heiress."

"Your niece. I never saw her."

"Nor I. She is my brother's child. She was brought up to the same trade as I was, and by that great mistress of it, my mother. You knew very little of us; we never desired that you should. My family, with which I have parted in consequence of marrying your brother, are the greatest family of dressmakers in the world. It is in the bounds of possibility that even my own mother may speak to me again, when Lord Festiniog recognises me—as he shall, now I know the truth."

"I suppose there is no use prolonging the discussion, Mary."

"There is none to prolong," said Mrs. Arnaud, "good-night."

Lord Rhyader felt that he had nothing to say but "good-night," and so he said it and went.

CHAPTER V.

MORE OF THE FIRST NIGHT.

THE nightmare was gone. She had faced Rhyader, and he had not quarrelled with her. The whole secret of her terror lay in

that. He was her husband's brother, and had been more kind to her than anybody. He was really the only person who connected her with her dead love. It is idle to think that women capable of such strong and almost violent resolutions, like Mrs. Arnaud, have not a deep fund of tenderness about them—that they cannot at times be utterly weak. Gervase was Ityd's brother, and so she, who cared nothing for the world as represented by Lord Festiniog, was terrified lest he should quarrel with her. She might have known that he never quarrelled with anybody, but unfortunately she was without that information. He was gone to his father, and she feared he would have rather a stormy time of it.

However, it was early yet, and there was much more to be seen to before she went to bed. Rachel was unaccountably long gone, but here she was at last. A square-featured middle-aged woman, who had lost her way, and her temper also, in the wilderness of London, and who was very cross. She had, it appeared, got into an omnibus to go a little way up Oxford Street, and had found herself at Smithfield. On getting out she registered a vow never to get into one of those vehicles again, and walked back asking her way. She had been unable to do the errand she was sent on, and was so utterly dazed that she thought she could not dare to go out again. Mrs. Arnaud remonstrated, but it was no use until George Drummond, coming down for something, at once volunteered to escort her. Mrs. Arnaud was so delighted with his good humour that she could have done anything for him. So she was left alone in the house again, but not in terror as before.

A single knock. It was the new maid. She was easily disposed of and set to work. Another single knock, it was the new footman, who, having for the time being deposited his box downstairs, asked if he could make himself useful at once. Mrs. Arnaud sent him at once upstairs to see if Mr. Drummond's fire was burning.

The latch-key again, loud voices in the hall, the door slammed, a crash of falling human bodies, and oaths. Captain D'Arcy and friend had come in in a very great hurry and tumbled headlong over the footman's box. "Here is a pretty beginning," said Mrs. Arnaud, as she took out a candle, and discovered to her horror that the hall gas had never been lit. Two good-looking soldierly men were rubbing their shins and elbows, when this splendid, almost ghostly figure of Mrs. Arnaud approached them.

"Captain D'Arcy," she said, addressing the wrong one: "I am exceedingly sorry that the hall lamp was unfortunately not lighted sooner. I will do everything I can to make you comfort-

able, but I have only arrived this afternoon, and you must try to forgive the mishaps of the first night."

"That is done in every theatre, madame," said the man she had addressed, "but I am not D'Arcy, he is somewhere back in the darkness, looking for his hat."

D'Arcy reappeared with it on his head; the moment he saw Mrs. Arnaud, he took it off again and bowed. "I beg a thousand pardons, Mrs. Arnaud, for entering the house in this manner, but I fancy that you have had some new convenience erected in the hall since this morning, with the existence of which I was unacquainted. I am aware somehow of the presence of a foreign substance."

A nice smiling slight man, very pleasant to look at indeed, with a manner which set them all three laughing; he bowed again and passed on. Immediately afterwards Rachel and George Drummond came in, and the whole house was in a bustle. She, the maid, the footman, and Rachel, were upstairs and down. It was eleven o'clock before she, being then at the top of the house, asked the maid (as pleasant a little maid as need be) whether she knew if her supper was ready.

"Mrs. Rachel had got it ready," she said.

"Well, then, I shall go to it," she said, adding to herself, "She will not come to-night now. I hope she will to-morrow."

She went down slowly to her own little back parlour, approached the fireplace, and then suddenly cried out loud, "Good gracious have mercy upon us!"

CHAPTER VI.

HELOISE.

SITTING in Mrs. Arnaud's own chair, with open work-box beside her, and her bonnet off, looking exactly as if she had been sitting there habitually for the last ten years, was the most lovely and beautifully dressed little French brunette she had ever seen. She simply took Mrs. Arnaud's breath away, and if she had faded away at once Mrs. Arnaud would have taken her to be a hallucination of her own brain, produced by over excitement, and taken medical advice. But she was perfectly real; when she heard Mrs. Arnaud's exclamation she looked up and came towards her, sewing

briskly. She put her work behind her, kissed Mrs. Arnaud on both cheeks, and then stood before her laughing with her eyes and mouth ("What teeth," thought Mrs. Arnaud), but making no sound whatever. She was real enough.

Mrs. Arnaud repeated, "Why, good gracious, goodness me!"

The beautiful little creature began nodding her head now, and smiling instead of laughing. Mrs. Arnaud found it necessary to speak in spite of her delighted surprise: "Why, my love, you must be Heloise, and are you dumb?"

It very soon appeared she was not; from between her pearly teeth came a babbling flow of the most perfect English, with just such a slight *souppçon* of French accent as would be totally unproduceable in English by a far cleverer pen than this can pretend to be, and with no imitation of which shall we trouble the reader. She began—

"Yes, aunt," she said, "it is Heloise, your little housekeeper and assistant. Ah! but you have my father's eyes, though, and I should love you for that if for nothing else. We will be happy in this pretty little parlour, will we not?" And much more in the same pleasant way, before Mrs. Arnaud could get in a word at all.

"How did you get into the house, my dear," she said at last.

"Chemin de fer du Nord, and then the packet-boat, and that you will understand was a sad thing; not that I was sick, aunt, but that the others were lamentably so. And in my opinion, those who are sick at sea should declare themselves at the custom-house, and be put in a separate cabin. Well, then, next the Douane, where I had nothing to declare; then the South-Eastern Railway to Charing Cross, and then the cab there. Then I knocked at the door, and Madame Rachel opened it, and the cabman asked four shillings, to which demand Madame Rachel replied in words of the most proud and contemptuous, and gave him half-a-crown. He at once intimated that he should appeal to the judge of instruction, and she replied that he might if he liked. He then departed without success. She then let me in, and told me that you were busy *au troisième*, and I came in and set to work. You open to-morrow, I understand, and I should like to open well.

"I have no doubt that we shall do so," said Mrs. Arnaud. "But I think that you had much better go back to Paris."

"Ah, you laugh now at me, but your reason?"

"You are too pretty, my love; I am sorry for it, but that is the simple fact of the case. I, when I made this bargain with my brother and my mother, never bargained for you."

"Well, then, you have made a bad bargain, and must abide by it. Now, aunt, I am certainly not going back to Paris, and so the best thing we can do is to——" she paused.

"What now, little one?" said Mrs. Arnaud.

"Look into the shop, my dear aunt. Of your genius there is no doubt, but of your knowledge of later details, much."

"We will have supper now, Heloise, and see to that in the morning," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"It is a good proposition," she said, and they sat down to supper, Rachel waiting.

"Is my brother well," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"No," said Heloise; "he has the continual cramps in his stomach, which he derives from the drinking of the wine from the vineyard which he purchased of Alphonse Bourdon. The doctor advises him cognac, but he insists that the wine of his vineyard is better. I wish, I am sure, he would take to cognac, for no wine worth drinking is grown in the north of France. He, however, sent his love to you."

"And your grandmother?"

"Well, for that, she is my grandmother, and tells me that I have no taste in colours, shall come to no good, and marry an English paper-hanger. I say, for my part, that I will certainly do so if I like him, and he has enough money."

"We must try to do better for you than that, my love," said Mrs. Arnaud. "You seem to have very good taste. Stand up."

The little fairy did so. The jewel was certainly set in a case which, to Mrs. Arnaud's experienced eye, was worthy of it. She put her elbow on the table and her hand on her forehead, and remained silent. Heloise with quiet dexterity arranged the remains of the supper together, ready to be carried away, and when that was done rang the bell.

Rachel appeared, and Mrs. Arnaud took no notice.

"Madame," said Heloise, "shall I assist you to carry these things downstairs? we are in a little confusion to-night, as you doubtless know. I will tell you a secret, Madame Rachel. Have you ever travelled?"

"No, Miss."

"Then I tell you that we French are far better housekeepers than you English. I shall give you the benefit of my advice and assistance, and if you rebel against me at all I shall beat you. Let us help one another; I will take these plates, you take those."

Rachel did as she was bid. As soon as they were in the passage together, Rachel said to her, bluntly,

"I would have given a thousand pounds, if I had it, Miss, to have you here. You will do more good for my mistress than what you know. You are the very person we wanted to keep her out of her low fits. For, brave as she is, she has them still. When you see one coming on, you, just in your pleasant way—both that knocker, there is some one else now; we sha'n't get to bed until two. Here, Susan, come and open the door."

Here was the last arrival for the night. Mrs. Arnaud had roused herself, and was silently helping Heloise and Rachel in putting away the things, when the door was opened; there was a scuffle in the passage. Susan screamed, and a railway-porter was towed into the room by a large dog. The porter finding himself apparently, as far as the dog was concerned, *en pays de connaissance*, let go of the chain; the dog leaped on the table and flew, apparently, at Mrs. Arnaud's throat. She embraced him. Rachel, who was counting the plate, banged him violently over the tail with a tablespoon, and the porter, like a man who had done his duty, took off his hat and wiped his fevered brow.

"Bran! Bran!" said Mrs. Arnaud, "why it is my own Bran. And grumpy sister Mary has sent him to me after all. Has sister Mary sent any message with him?"

The porter said that he understood from the station-master that the dog was to be brought on that night at any expense. Lady Mary Corby had requested that it should be done. She, as the lady doubtless knew, was their chairman's sister; and so he had come away with it at once.

The porter was rewarded beyond his utmost hopes; Bran, a long Scotch terrier, was quieted, Captain D'Arcy's friend departed, and, oh! for the bathos, everybody went to bed.

Heloise slept in her aunt's room. Mrs. Arnaud thought that the girl was asleep. But when she had lain down the girl said to her, "What did you say, aunt?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Arnaud. But that was not exactly true. She had said to herself aloud, "The girl is too pretty, and might get into mischief." So there was peace in that house for one night, at all events.

CHAPTER VII.

OPENING DAY.

THE morning, the most dreaded morning, came ; and Mrs. Arnaud woke with very much the feeling of a criminal about to be hanged as soon as he has eaten a hearty breakfast ; a thing which murderers under sentence seem always to do. She had to face the world once more in her old character ; and that to her was worse than going out of it by an easy death. She said to herself (she would never have used such a vulgarism to any other human being), " I would sooner be—well—executed, than go through to-day. They say that the death is so easy. Yet how can they possibly know ? they have none of them been executed themselves."

With such feelings did Mrs. Arnaud get out of bed, slip on her dressing-gown, and go to the window to look into the silent street. The atmosphere of London in the summer mornings is very good ; even St. George's, Hanover Square, looked sharp and clear ; and she thought that it would not do badly under the sky of Paris, though a poor building enough in our mid-day London smoke. She opened the window to let the fresh air in, so that it might awaken Heloise, and then she turned to her bed : it was empty.

Not only empty but perfectly made. Heloise's night-dress was lying in a pretty embroidered bag, on the smoothed pillow. Her peignoir was carefully folded on the chair beside the dressing-table ; and as Mrs. Arnaud looked round, she perceived that everything which she, Mrs. Arnaud, could possibly want, had been set out and arranged for her while she was asleep, yet it was only seven o'clock.

" Well ! " said Mrs. Arnaud. " If that girl is as good a milliner as she is a lady's maid, we shall do very well. She must have a foot like a fox, for I never heard her. I suppose I had better dress myself. I wish she were not so pretty."

She did so, but it took a long time, though it was only her first toilette. She was beautiful, and she knew it well ; but she never dressed because she was beautiful, but from the instinct of her life. She was perfectly dressed when she left her room to go downstairs, but she would no more have gone beyond the street-door in such a costume, than she would have walked about the Palais Royal in her dressing-gown, or than she would have used her magnificent voice in a music-hall at Stepney. She had no passion for dress, only an instinct, which some say is only

acquired at Paris, though we should say that it was equally strong at Metz.

Coming downstairs, however, perfectly dressed, she passed into the parlour ; she found her breakfast ready, with the coffee on the hob, and her hot roll before the fire. There also she found Heloise, rather better dressed than herself, if it were possible, sitting in her chair, with a great fold of blue satin over her knees, the hem of which she was turning up diligently.

" My dear aunt," she said, " come here and kiss me, and tell me that you forgive me for not waking you. I cannot serve you, for I should soil my hands ; but Rachel and I have your breakfast ready. I have been in terror over this dress, and I find that you have no machine in the house.

" What dress is it ? "

" It is Lady Bludyer's, due to-morrow. I have sent out to hire a machine, and I will manage it for you."

" But I know nothing about it."

" No doubt ; but it is in the order-book, which I looked over this morning, and it must be done. There are many other things in the order-book, do you see. I can manage them all with a machine. Your predecessor was a vastly stupid person, but in spite of her stupidity she had a good connection ; you and I must keep it."

" You little jewel, you shall stay with me," said Mrs. Arnaud.

" And indeed I mean to do so," said the busy little Heloise.

" There is one thing, aunt, which I wish to know."

" And that ? "

" Is this little parlour of yours private ? Do your lodgers come here ? "

" Never."

" Make that a rule. I am not afraid of Frenchmen, but manners are different in different countries, that is all."

" No one shall speak to you, dear."

" I did not mean that. I shall speak to any one I choose, but always first. Remember that. Ah ! here is Madame Rachel."

When at ten o'clock the shop windows were opened, Mrs. Arnaud sat down among the headless effigies in a perfectly calm frame of mind. She had changed her toilette, and was ready for anybody. She heard the busy machine of her niece Heloise going in the back parlour, and, with that brave beauty at her back, feared nothing.

For she thought that the girl was as brave, as honest, and as true as she was herself, and she knew also that the girl had experiences of a world of which she knew nothing, the world of

Paris. She herself knew Leghorn, Naples, and Rome, but what was that? The girl's taste in colour was more bright than neutral, but was every one to dress in the same way? The girl was a mine of gold to her, and besides she loved her, and intended to take uncommonly good care that no one else should. Little did she dream the truth.

Mrs. Arnaud sat in her shop from ten o'clock until twelve, but nobody came. She began to think about the bankruptcy court, and went into the parlour to speak to Heloise on the subject. The moment she had done so, she was fetched back by the footman, and began life in earnest once more.

Her first customer. She remembered her well in her mother's time, and the lady remembered her very well; but from motives, possibly of delicacy, did not choose to say so. She only said, "I believe that you are the daughter of Madame Merton, who emigrated most unfortunately to Paris after a sad domestic affliction some years ago. If you inherit her taste you ought to do well."

"To mention it the first day," thought Mrs. Arnaud. "I will plague her. What would Lady Sotheby desire?" she asked.

Lady Sotheby, a beauty, originally of very low extraction, who was fifty if she was a day, was now about to marry a third time. The new bridegroom was a rich manufacturing engineer, without any pretensions to birth, a man who had worked at the bench, it was said, but with infinitely more pretensions to be a gentleman than ever Lady Sotheby had to be a lady, if manners and education were taken into account. He was one of the first practical engineers in the land, and an F.R.S.; and, at forty-five, he had taken it into his head to propose to Lady Sotheby. She had hummed and hawed over the matter, and at last had referred him to her last noble father-in-law, who told him that he, as far as he was concerned, was perfectly willing in the matter, and told her, in a private interview, that she had made a splendid catch, and that he hoped she would leave off her nonsense for the future, because her new husband most certainly would not stand it.

Lady Sotheby at first seemed to want everything in the shop, but she settled down at last to a purple satin gown, and a powder blue (*Chasseur d'Afrique*) cloak, both to be made up at once and sent home. She then asked what were the fashionable colours for a bride on her wedding tour.

Mrs. Arnaud's irritation against her found its vent at last. She said,

"For a lady who is going to be married for the third time, within three months of her own mother's death, slight mourning is the most fashionable, my lady."

The old Elizabethan expression of one person "looking daggers" at another is of no use to us at all. Lady Sotheby looked cobras and rattlesnakes. If she could have bitten Mrs. Arnaud and have given her the hydrophobia she would have done it. But the good millionaire had heard nothing, so she only said, "You will be pleased to send the dress and the cloak by to-morrow."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said Mrs. Arnaud: "Do you mean to wear them together?"

"Certainly," said Lady Sotheby.

"Then," said Mrs. Arnaud, "I am sorry to say that I cannot supply you. If you went into the streets such a figure, and the iniquity of it was traced home to me, I should lose the confidence of my customers, and might as well shut up my shop."

Lady Sotheby said, "Woman!"

"Yes, my lady. I think we understand one another; but to be fair and frank with you, I am not afraid of you at all. I neither want your good word nor your custom."

On the dignified departure of that lady, she went back to Heloise. "Brave aunt," she said, "I heard every word. Is he rich? Will he pay the money she owes grandmamma in Paris?"

"Never name it, child; never make mischief between man and wife. Here is another customer."

"I will undertake this one," said Heloise, going quietly into the shop. The footman whispered to her, "Lord and Lady Morningside."

The old Scotch judge had seated himself, and Lady Morningside was wandering about among the fine things. My Lord, very old and short of breath, looked at Heloise as she curtsied to him; he said not one word, but called to Lady Morningside to come and look. She did so, and he remarked, "That is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen in my life. She is the very image of what you were when I married you."

Heloise heard him, and said to herself, "Ah, I have heard that once or twice before. But now to business, my good people: her ladyship was never any more like me than I shall be like her. I shall never have a nose like a tapir, and a mouth like a hippopotamus."

She fancied herself very witty to have thought that; she made up her mind to tell it to her aunt and make her laugh, but our little miss got a lesson which she did not forget.

"My dear," said Lady Morningside, "I want a cap."

"Shall I assist your ladyship to take your bonnet off?"

"No, I will do that myself, I think," said the old lady. "If

you were to take off my bonnet you might take off my wig too, and then a pretty spectacle I should look without a hair on my head."

"I should never have guessed it, madame," said Heloise.

"You must be pretty young at your business then, my child," said the old lady, "or you would know false hair from real. My hair was as good as yours once. What pretty teeth you have."

Heloise could not help smiling. Not to show them—of course not.

"Ah! I could smile once," said the old lady, "now I can only grin; but my teeth are as pretty as yours. They are artificial, my dear, and cost thirty guineas. You will be a worse spectacle than I am if you live, for there are no women like Ninon l'Enclos left among the French. See that you get a husband who will love you to the end, as mine does."

"How am I to select him, madame?" said Heloise.

"God will select him for you. Do your duty by him, and when you are seventy you will be as happy as I am now. Once get a good man, and he will be exactly, as far as you are concerned, what you make him."

Heloise had nothing to say, but she thought of these things afterwards. Lord Morningside, who had not been in London for some years, seemed inclined to decorate this rather hideous old lady as though she had been a bride. Though he would have died on the block sooner than confess it, he had a distrust of all Scotch millinery and jewellery as being provincial. Abusing and pretending to hate London, he nevertheless determined that Lady Morningside should return to Edinburgh in garments which should raise envy in the county families, among whom he, as a mere law lord, risen from the ranks, and his wife, who had, it was said, been a shepherdess, were merely admitted by courtesy. Yet, the strange, childless old couple were well known, and profoundly respected. She, in Edinburgh, as one of the most charitable and excellent of women: he, in London, as the shrewdest of Scottish lawyers. Mrs. Arnaud could have had no better advertisement than the good will of the grand old man.

Nor, indeed, did she suffer in a pecuniary point of view, as she found when she joined the party. Lady Morningside was buying everything she could lay her hands on, and what is more, exercising very great good taste. The Scotch women have, on the whole, better taste in dress than the English, though it takes a Frenchwoman to wear tartan to perfection. Mrs. Arnaud found no fault with Lady Morningside's arrangements, save in slight details, which that lady altered at once by her advice. Finally, Lord

and Lady Morningside got the footman to fetch a four-wheeled cab, and went away in it, leaving Mrs. Arnaud richer by £116.

"Now," said Heloise as they sat down to table: "we will have dinner. If other customers come, Rachel shall serve them, and put on their things upside down. That we shall make our fortunes is quite undoubted. But she is an old skeleton who has come out of the cupboard."

"Who?"

"Why, Lady Morningside," said Heloise. "She said that I should be just as terrible a figure as she is when I am her age. But she said, moreover, that I must choose my husband by chance, and form him afterwards. I would not take the trouble. Aunt, what is the use of having a husband at all? that is what I am unable to discover. If you loved a man I can understand that you undertook his sorrows and your own together, until the day of judgment. But a mere husband, Bah! a man you have never seen half-a-dozen times, and who may be disagreeable, and spend all your money. I cannot see why women who can earn their own living should marry."

"You do not like men, then, my little niece," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"On the contrary, I adore men; but I do not want them to marry me."

"You mean that you have never seen a man you cared to marry."

"No."

"Have you had any lovers?"

"Two. They, however, were lovers sent by the family, and came with bouquets and new gloves. I soon disposed of them. They came smirking as though the affair was settled. One, a sensible fellow, took his answer and went away: the other persisted after I had given my answer. The Burgundy blood which is in me came out. I arose in my fury—I was at work—and told him that if he did not leave the room, I would stab him to his false heart with my needle. He was frightened, this one, and departed like the other. Save these I have had no lovers—See, we have a soldier in the room."

She actually sat before Mrs. Arnaud and uttered all this without change of countenance, looking Mrs. Arnaud straight in the face. She surely should have hailed from Gascony, not from Burgundy.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Arnaud," said a very quiet voice, "but I am on duty this afternoon, and I should be exceedingly obliged if you would—I think I see Mademoiselle Heloise, whom I knew in Paris."

"Surely," she said, rising. "Why, it is M. D'Arcy, my old confidant. And how goes the——?"

He shook his head, laughing, and addressed Mrs. Arnaud. He was a well-looking young man at all times, and looked all the better in his uniform. He was certainly very attractive, and Mrs. Arnaud might have wished him less so, but she remembered what she had seen upstairs, and did not mind. He was engaged.

"I am pleased to renew my acquaintance with the young lady. I hope I shall be allowed to pay my respects to her sometimes. I will take my leave."

They had a busy afternoon; her predecessor's customers seemed to rally round her very well, and it was evident that she and Heloise were in possession of a handsome income, and so ended the first day, Heloise being more cheerful in the evening than she had been in the morning, if possible, and continually wondering why women were ever so silly as to marry.

"You will be married within a year, my fawn," said Mrs. Arnaud, as they went upstairs.

"That is quite unlikely," replied Heloise, looking sharply at her aunt from the shadow.

CHAPTER VIII.

JAMES AND GEORGE DRUMMOND.

WHEN Drummond, the lawyer, told Mrs. Arnaud that he disliked to see George Drummond, because he reminded him of his mother, he told a falsehood. He was greatly attached to the young man. No father ever loved a son better or did more for a son. Lord Festiniog often noticed it to Lord Rhyader, and thought it very much to Drummond's credit, for, to tell the truth, Drummond had made a hopelessly bad match, and Mrs. Drummond, long before her death, was settled out of his house by a monetary arrangement. With her we have nothing whatever to do. She was dead, and Drummond, a comparatively young man, was free to marry whom he liked, provided that the lady was of the same mind as himself.

The day after Mrs. Arnaud's new entry into the world, he had asked George to dine with him, and George and he were sitting together over their wine in a small but very expensive house in Park Lane.

"Well, and have you seen your landlady yet, George?" said Drummond, passing the decanter, "and if so, what do you think of her?"

"I think her a magnificent woman; I was very much taken with her. I tell you everything, you know, father, and so I tell you this. I saw her under very peculiar circumstances. Rhyader came to her the first night she was in the house, and terrified her."

"Ah, I daresay she would be frightened at seeing him for the first time under the circumstances."

"And what were they?"

"Well, I will tell you," said Drummond. "She has, after many years, found out that she was really married to Rhyader's brother, Iltyd, and she insists that my lord should recognise the fact. They have had a most tremendous fight over it. She told him that she would shame him into acknowledgment by writing 'The Honourable Mrs. Arnaud,' over her shop door. Has she done so?"

"I don't fancy she has, but I was never aware of the fact that you knew her. You astonish me completely," said George Drummond. "There is 'Mrs. Arnaud' in very large letters, but there are undecipherable words on each side. So she may have done so."

"Clever woman! I daresay if you look closer you will find that she has."

"But will Lord Festiniog acknowledge her?"

"I don't know. After fighting the woman single-handed, he came to me for assistance, and asked me, as his legal adviser, whether she had any claim. I looked into the matter, and told him that he had not a leg to stand on, and that she was his son's wife. Then he got into a huff, and said he should have counsel's opinion. But all the counsel in the world will make her nothing but his son's wife. I told him that as she had no children, the acknowledgment of her could do him no harm, and proposed to him to offer her a sum of money to keep her counsel. Even he laughed at the idea of such a thing, and so the matter stands to this hour."

"Who was Mrs. Arnaud, father?"

"Marie or Mary Merton. Her father was an Englishman, her mother the queen of French modistes in England. When her daughter went off from Bond Street with young Iltyd Arnaud she migrated to Paris, and refused to see or hear of her daughter; but now Mrs. Arnaud has proved her marriage, they are the best friends in the world, again, I believe. I saw her in Paris only a

fortnight ago. She is sending over a niece of Mrs. Arnaud's, a favourite grand-daughter of hers, to assist her in the business. Have you seen her?"

"No, I am not in the least degree likely to see her."

"Well, that is lucky for your heart, at all events. She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw."

"Then my fellow lodger, D'Arcy, should see her, and console himself."

"I know what you are going to say. Poor spoony, that is all over with him. I can tell you that he has got his *congé*."

"From her father?"

"Yes, and from the whole lot of them. The family would not have stood such a thing for a moment. He can't keep her as she would expect. She will be much happier without him; I daresay he won't mind; he will be free again, and if he makes much acquaintance with Mademoiselle Heloise, he will be a dangerous rival."

"To whom?"

"To yourself."

"But I don't want to have anything to do with the girl."

"Well, you may be deficient in good taste, of course."

"But I could not marry a French milliner."

"Why not, if you asked her? You are only an attorney's son. I can tell you, from what I have heard of the young lady, that I should not object."

"Ah, you are having your joke, sir; I thought I was to be a gentleman."

"And so you are; though, mind, I will not have you an idle one. You stick to your desk; it won't give you much money, my boy, you must come to me for *that*, but it will give you position; you will rise in that service, with your talents and industry, far higher than you could in my business. Do you want any money, George?"

"No, father; I can lend you ten pounds if you like. Why should I want money? You give me my horse and my clothes, and keep me like a gentleman; you have done everything which could be done for me. I wish that I could go back to the university, and get a better degree than I did to show my gratitude, but that is too late."

"I am perfectly satisfied, George; your degree was good enough. If I had meant you to take a better degree I should have sent you to another college. You held your own bravely, and I am proud of you."

George reached over his hand, and the other took it silently.

Mr. Drummond's hand shook, and his face was disturbed by some strong emotion. The conversation changed, and not long afterwards they parted.

CHAPTER IX.

FESTINIOG AND RHYADER.

MRS. ARNAUD's dreadful threat of writing up "the Honourable Mrs. Arnaud," over her shop, had actually been fulfilled. But it had been done in a way which left a compromise possible. Two little flourishes on the left contained the dreadful words, those words of fate, "the honourable"; but no one could read them; while on the right were two other little flourishes, also illegible, containing the words "milliner and dressmaker." Between those two scrolls came the great golden legend, "MRS. ARNAUD." And so no one, unless he had taken an opera-glass, was one whit the wiser.

With the exception of Lord Rhyader. After his interview with Mrs. Arnaud he had reconnoitred the premises, and had seen that she had really done as she threatened. He departed and told his father. They laid their heads together, and agreed that it would not do to trifle with her.

"And it would not be right to trifle with her either," said Lord Rhyader, "now that we know all we do."

"Why, no!" said Lord Festiniog. "As long as I was in doubt I did not care. But there is no doubt any longer now. She is your sister-in-law, and her marriage was perfectly legal. It would be most ungentlemanly, and also most impolitic to dispute it. I suppose she will marry Drummond."

"I don't think so. Still she might. We can, however, not dispute the fact of her having been married."

"Now Rhyader, will you explain to me this? Drummond must surely have known of the circumstances, for he was often with her abroad. Why did he conceal them from me? I appealed to him about the matter, and he at once gave it against me. I don't clearly make that out."

"Nor I either," said Lord Rhyader. "If I were to say that I distrusted Drummond, I should lie: if I said that I trusted him, I should also lie. He loved her once, you know: that explains much. He is a lawyer: that explains more. He evidently could

have known the thing had he chosen, but did not choose until you appealed to him to do his duty by you. I don't profess to understand a man like Drummond. If you had had a drunken wife, sir, you might have had a craze or so in your brain. Have you any fault to find with him, further than this concealment, if concealment it be?"

"None. Money grows under his hands; I have really nothing to do but to sign my name. And, besides, he must be very rich."

"You had better let him marry Mary, sir," said Lord Rhyader.

"The Honourable Mrs. Drummond," said Lord Festiniog. "I should not care. But she would not have him."

"Indeed, I think so."

"However," said Lord Festiniog, "you agree with me that this squabble with Mary ought to be patched up. You had better leave the how to me."

"Oh yes, sir. She is such a dear creature, and such a noble creature, that now, when we know all, or think we do, we should not continue it. Besides, in doing so, we redeem poor Iltyd's memory so entirely. I pray you to do it."

"It shall be done, Gervase: it shall be done. Say no more."

"You won't show any distrust to Drummond, father, will you?" said Lord Rhyader.

"Distrust Drummond, bless my heart, no. I will not distrust him at all, at least in money matters. Yet he did an unprincipled thing once: he made love to Mary when he was a married man: that was utterly ill; but he was mad then, and it was very long ago. Have you seen his son lately?"

"That prig? yes, I often see him."

"What is he growing to be like? Does he take after his father? I like what I have seen of him."

"I do not particularly. George Drummond is one of my pet horrors. Rugby, with a finish off of Brasenose, and a *post pleiocene* crust of Home Office."

"Cad?"

"Why no, worse than that. You may lick a cad into shape, but George Drummond has licked himself into shape, and a most objectionable shape it is."

"I'll see more of him," said Lord Festiniog. "I fancy, from your description, that I should like him very much indeed. By-the-bye, that cub of yours has never been near me for two days, and his mother not for four. If they are going to cut me altogether, let me know it."

"Oh, I should have told you. Alice and George have run down to Richmond for a few days."

"I will follow them as soon as I have done with Mary. I sha'n't be long with you, Gervase, and then you will have all. Let me see the boy as much as I can."

"I am afraid that Barri loves you better than he does me, sir," said Gervase.

CHAPTER X.

LORD FESTINIOG AND MRS. ARNAUD.

SOME days had passed of Mrs. Arnaud's new life. Even in that short time business had accumulated most rapidly. People had seen her and Heloise, and told other people about them. Lord and Lady Morningside had sounded the first trumpet about them with no uncertain sound, and when a trumpet is sounded at the beginning of the season, it is generally attended to. There was a general assembly over these two splendid women, and the world rushed to see them. Had anything been wanted to add to their popularity, it was the fact that Lady Sotheby steadily abused them, and said that Mrs. Arnaud had been grossly impertinent to her. As *she* was always impertinent to that part of the world to which she was admitted, this was a further recommendation, and so Mrs. Arnaud found her hands full.

Lady Drycough, who delighted in all the innocent wickedness of this world, once examined Heloise as to what Mrs. Arnaud had said to Lady Sotheby. Heloise said that she was not sure, but that she believed that her aunt had said that she was not there to dress up Guy Fawkes. This being repeated with emendations, did them vast good, for insulting the common enemy is a more popular thing in a certain world than assisting the common friend.

On the afternoon of the third day, Mrs. Arnaud and Heloise had been extremely busy. Affairs had increased on them so far, that Mrs. Arnaud had written to Paris for Heloise's sister, Clotilde. Mrs. Arnaud felt perfectly faint with the work, and, asking Heloise to stand in the breach for a quarter of an hour, said that she would go into her back parlour, and sit down in her chair.

Her chair; her own sacred chair, was turned with its back

towards the door, and in it was a square dogmatic head, covered with short white hair, the top and rear of which was only visible. The head was reading her illustrated Wordsworth, and the hands which belonged to it were long, thin, and old, and the right hand was covered with diamonds.

"Is that you, Mary?" said the head, without moving.

"Yes, my lord."

"Yes, fiddle. Come and sit down somewhere. I want to talk to you. Sit down somewhere, where I cannot see you. Have you sat down?"

"Yes, Lord Festiniog."

"Good, Mary. I have been entirely in the wrong in the matter in dispute between us. I have asked Drummond about it, and he says that you are in the right. I acknowledge you, entirely, as my poor son Iltyd's wife, and your patience, and your virtues under your wrongs, have entirely endeared you to me. If you had any children living I might have been more eager to dispute your claim to be my daughter-in-law, but it would have been no use. I see that your marriage was legal in every way, and I rejoice that the cloud is removed from the memory of my son, who was dear to me, with all his faults. Do you desire anything more?"

"What more can I desire? I only wish that our old relations should be renewed, and that I may see Lady Rhyader and the boy again. Pity my childless condition, and let him come to me sometimes."

"He shall come to you as often as you choose, though, faith, I am speaking for Rhyader rather freely. But he will not object, and you need not fear Alice. Don't spoil the boy, you know, for he is the only hope of the house."

"I will take care of him," said Mrs. Arnaud, bending over and kissing Lord Festiniog's forehead. "Now, good papa, would you like to see my niece Heloise?"

"Very much indeed. I hear she is the most beautiful creature in London."

Much as he had heard of her, however, in a few days, the reality surpassed his expectation; he had a short conversation with her, and, as he rose to go, he said to himself, "Master George Drummond had better look after his heart in that quarter"; but in the hall he met D'Arcy and put a rider to his opinion, "unless she takes a fancy to that spark, indeed, which is quite probable; he seems as though he lodged in the house, for he came in with the latch-key. Mary has been a fool to have such a girl as that in the house, with young men for

lodgers; she will have a murder about her; and now that I have privately acknowledged Mary as a dressmaker, we shall be still more distinguished. I will go back and have another talk to her."

This time he went right into the shop and beckoned her to follow him into the parlour. She did so at once, to the surprise of the one customer who was there, and to the astonishment of the footman.

"Mary," he said, "I have forgotten one or two things. Our reconciliation need not be exactly public, I suppose, but I think that Rhyader and I had better have a paper drawn up by Drummond, saying that we are fully satisfied on the subject of Iltyd's honour and your own."

"I don't want Drummond in it at all, my lord," she said. "Gervase and you could do it perfectly. I don't want to be thrown against Mr. Drummond: he is——"

She was as near as possible saying, "He has for his own purposes, I believe, done me a great service; but he has been utterly false to you," when she made this awkward pause.

"He is what?" said Lord Festiniog, not helping her in the least.

"He is," said Mrs. Arnaud, looking steadily at him, "attached to me."

She expected an outburst of anger, but none came, to her surprise. He said, "I suspected that long ago, but he would never do for you, would he? not to be thought of?"

"Can you, who knew your son Iltyd, ask me such a question?"

"Why, only with the idea of getting one answer," he said, good-naturedly. "I say, to change the subject, you will have trouble with that niece of yours, the young men will be cutting one another's heads off about her."

"She can take care of herself," said Mrs. Arnaud; which Mademoiselle Heloise certainly could do, though not exactly in the way Mrs. Arnaud meant.

Ah! but can the young men take care of themselves?" he replied. "I never could, I know. By-the-bye, Mary, put a dab of black paint on the left of your signboard, will you, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Well, I was going to write it, but I will speak it—Unless you choose to have ten thousand pounds settled on you; to make over your business to your niece; and to retire comfortably."

"No. You are most kind and generous. You always were, save for a short time, but my answer will be now, always, no. A few days have shown me that I want employment, and I shall be

happy here. Our secret is entirely our own; as for the small matter which, to spite you, I wrote up, it was done so artistically that I doubt if the painter could read it. No, Lord Festiniog, leave me to be happy in my own way, but let the boy come to me. I wish to see the boy sometimes. It is not much to ask. Send Barri."

CHAPTER XI.

MADAME.

"I SUPPOSE, aunt Arnaud, that you have heard from my sister Clotilde?" said Heloise, within a week of the last conversation.

"Well, my dear, I have. I heard yesterday."

"Then she is coming at once, I suppose?"

"Why, no; I do not think that she is coming at all. I am afraid, my dear, that your grandmother is coming instead."

"*Le bon Dieu ne le per*——" Heloise had got as far as that, when she was stopped by a look from Mrs. Arnaud, so she never said, "*mettra jamais*"; which was what she meant to say. Mrs. Arnaud rode the high English horse over her at once.

"Family circumstances," said Mrs. Arnaud, solemnly, "have for certain reasons brought about a coolness between my mother and myself. Those circumstances and reasons are now removed. I shall welcome my mother as a daughter should."

"But, grandmamma," said Heloise, looking as cross as she could, and shrugging her shoulders.

"She is your grandmother, my dear, and my mother; you should remember that."

"I am not likely to forget it, aunt. I came here to escape from her, and now she is coming after me. I thought that we were going to be so comfortable."

"My child," said Mrs. Arnaud, "have you earned comfort? What have you ever done which should give you the right of avoiding your grandmother?"

"Well, if you come to that, aunt, what have you done which should give you the right of avoiding *your* grandmother?"

"My grandmother is in Heaven," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"I wish mine was," said Heloise.

"Child, you talk nonsense! Child, you are a fool! Your grandmother is worth ten of you or me. She has strong political

opinions, and is of the old fashion ; but there are very few women in Europe like her."

"Very well, aunt," said Heloise : "I will submit, I never did anything else. How long is it since you saw her ?"

"Twenty-two years. I informed her that I had made a certain discovery. She most generously believed me, without waiting for further proofs, and extended to me her full forgiveness."

"You won't stand her," said Heloise, "I can tell you *that*. I will be all obedience, but it *is* hard that a poor girl like myself should find no protection in Europe. However," she added to herself, "the remedy is always in my own hands."

A great friendship had arisen in this short time between Heloise and her aunt's ill-tempered maid, Rachel. Friendships of this kind are made up of similarities and contrasts. But, Victor Hugo apart, an old, cross, and ugly woman may have a strong friendship for a very young, well-tempered, and beautiful woman, if they have anything in common. Rachel was old, ugly, and cross ; Heloise was young, beautiful, and very amiable. Rachel had, at the first, been strongly opposed to the introduction of Heloise into the house, yet, now, she would have deserted her mistress to serve her. They had a *point d'appui*, these two. Rachel very quickly discovered, Suffolk woman as she was, that the French girl, Heloise, was a better housekeeper than she was herself. Heloise had never asserted herself in the kitchen, but when she had seen Rachel holding up her eyes over the iniquities and wastefulness of the London servants, she had answered with her eyes.

These demonstrations brought about, first, consultation, then confidence. Heloise showed Rachel twenty things in French domestic economy which she never knew before, and Rachel was almost converted to the idea that the French were not idiots. Heloise was half English, however, and so, without withdrawing her allegiance to the British throne, Rachel was able to believe in Heloise as the most charming person, next to the Princess of Wales. After this announcement of the coming of Mrs. Arnaud's mother, they had a slight confidence in the kitchen.

"My grandmamma is coming, Rachel," said Heloise, "and there is no more rest for us this side of the grave."

"That will be worse for you than for me, Miss ; will it not ? What sort of a lady is she ?"

"*Hein*, I do not know. At least, I cannot say. She is different with different people. She is not kind to me, but to my sister most kind. She loves money, and in my opinion comes here——"

Suddenly Heloise remembered that she was talking to a

servant, and left off. In France things were different, she argued; in England no one talked with servants. Rachel wished to continue the conversation, but Heloise was inexorable. Rachel, however, had heard as much as she chose to hear, and she was strongly prejudiced against Madame Merton, before she ever came into the house.

But the old lady arrived before affairs had in any way settled down, and before Mrs. Arnaud quite knew what she was about. Business was coming in in the most remarkable manner. Heloise and Mrs. Arnaud had not an hour to themselves. The receipts were enormous, *so large, in fact, that Mrs. Arnaud was at her wits' end to supply stock.* She was in an *embarras des richesses*. She must borrow some money soon, for she had spent all her own, and though people bought, it was on credit. Should she borrow of Lord Festiniog? that she did not wish to do. Drummond would let her have any money she wanted, but that would not do by any means. Within a fortnight, she saw that she must expend more money in replenishing stock, and at the end of that time her mamma arrived from Paris, and relieved the garrison, not only with money, which might have been got elsewhere, but with taste and experience, which could have been got nowhere.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Arnaud's freedom, and that of Heloise, was gone once more. Madame was in her way a harder taskmaster than she had ever had before. At once, Rachel and Heloise had entered into a Holy Alliance against her, and Mrs. Arnaud, as an Englishwoman, preserved an armed neutrality. She was amused to see the extraordinary confidence which was growing up between Heloise and Rachel: it was doubtless due to their hatred of the common enemy.

When she first came, Rachel was extremely astonished at Heloise's account of her, for she seemed a very agreeable old lady, who was most affectionately attentive to Mrs. Arnaud and most courteous to herself. But Rachel soon found out what was the matter with her, and groaned in spirit. It is difficult to explain why she drove every one mad, but we must endeavour to do so.

In the first place, she never stopped talking, which might have been got over, but then she never talked about anything in any way agreeable, or had a solitary good word for any one: she and her family were the most important people in the universe, and the world seemed to her to be in a combination against them. Then she would have everything explained to her at full length, of whatever nature it might be, and never by any chance allowed that any one had done right. If the most trifling thing went

wrong, it was because she had not been consulted about it : prove her wrong in any one thing and she would speak a quarter of an hour afterwards, exactly as if she was in the right. She was a prodigiously good housekeeper, and although she took none of the responsibility of the housekeeping herself, she never ceased talking about it to her daughter.

There she was, however, sitting in Mrs. Arnaud's easy chair, and talking without ceasing on details of all kinds : about herself, about Mrs. Arnaud's relation with the late Iltyd, about the money she had lent her daughter (she never left *that* subject alone for above a quarter of an hour together), about the servants, about every kind of minute detail in the house. Always giving advice, offended when it was not taken, returning to the charge until it was, and then turning on her daughter for a poor, silly, dear thing, if the matter went wrong. There she was, an old woman of the sea, with but one fact about her which gave any hope of escape from her, and that was her rheumatism.

It was after she had been there half of one day that this great fact about her was discovered. Heloise remembered it first, and, with her brilliant genius, saw hope.

Madame on the very first day showed the weak point in her armour, and, as we said before, Heloise, knowing her well, had hope. Madame was partly agreeable on the first day, but Heloise knew that she could be so, for her own purposes, after dinner ; but knowing what would with ordinary luck occur, she said nothing until Madame, who had been talking at her best, desired to go to bed, and asked where she was to sleep.

"You sleep at the top of the house, grandmamma," said Heloise, promptly. "I shall sleep in the same room now—I have moved up—a very nice one. You must be tired ; shall I take you to bed ?"

"At the top of the house ?" said Madame, aghast. "My dear Heloise, you know, as well as I do, that I cannot walk upstairs."

"I do not know what is to be done then, grandmamma : unless you take aunt Arnaud's bed, and she sleeps in yours ; that is to say, in the same room with myself."

"I suppose that there is nothing else to be done," said Madame. "It is hard on a woman of my age, but I have always sacrificed myself to my children. I will sleep downstairs."

The arrangement was most promptly made ; Mrs. Arnaud and Heloise departed upstairs, leaving the old lady in full possession of the back-parlour and the bedroom adjoining. The Emperor of Russia calculated the effect of cold on the French army, but he

had a long time to think about it. Heloise had but little time to think about her grandmamma's rheumatism, yet she utilised it in the most dexterous manner. She and her aunt were free at the top of the house, where no grandmamma could reach them.

Was it for better or for worse that that cunning old French-woman was isolated in the lower part of the house with Rachel? That is a question which will answer itself.

To go on with our narrative. The coming of the old French-woman sent Heloise and Mrs. Arnaud upstairs, leaving her to get through the night in the best way she could. Mrs. Arnaud and Heloise encamped in the apartments immediately above George Drummond's, and found peace and freedom.

CHAPTER XII.

BARRI.

MADAME never guessed what she had done on the very first day of her coming, by her temper and her rheumatism. She drove Mrs. Arnaud and Heloise into the third story. Heloise had seen this from the first, and had devotedly removed her own bed there, but she had held her tongue about her grandmamma's rheumatism, just to avoid discussion. She had also mentioned the third story, generally, as a "bed-room," whereas it was an excellent suite of rooms, slightly lower from floor to ceiling than the two other floors, but most comfortable in every way, as the late tenant, Major Chutney, knew full well. Madame, however, had the intense pleasure of believing that her daughter and granddaughter were sleeping in an attic under the tiles.

The rooms were most excellently furnished, and so high over the street that the noise, such as there was in Hartley Street, was almost inaudible. Mrs. Arnaud and Heloise made themselves completely comfortable, and although meals were eaten in the back-parlour downstairs, under the superintendence of Madame, who grumbled persistently at Rachel's cooking, still, more went on upstairs than ever she knew about. People desiring to see Mrs. Arnaud privately had only to knock at the private door, be let in by Rachel, and ascend to the sanctum at once.

Barri, the son of Lord Rhyader, was one of the first visitors. Heloise, one morning, taking rest from the business and her

grandmamma, was reading in the sitting-room, when Rachel announced Mr. Drummond and the young gentleman. Heloise rose, and saw George Drummond for the first time. He seemed in an instant startled and confused. She was woman, and Frenchwoman enough to know that it was at her own beauty. She liked it, and, what is more, she liked him. By his side was a handsome boy whom she did not know.

"I beg pardon, Mademoiselle, but Lord Rhyader asked me to convey my young friend here to see Mrs. Arnaud. Mr. Barri Arnaud—Mademoiselle Heloise."

"As if," Barri said, with his hands in his breeches pockets and his hat under his left arm, "a fellow of fourteen at Eton couldn't find the way for himself, without having the way shown him by a clerk in the Home Office, and that clerk George Drummond. I assure you, Mademoiselle, that this man is a lunatic."

"Barri," said George Drummond, "I will give you something that you will remember, directly."

"All right, my boy. I sha'n't resist. I will wait until I am big enough, and then I will give it back."

"Well, then, don't be impertinent, child."

"Child, yes, I am a mere child, am I not, Mademoiselle?"

"Certainly, Monsieur, and I am fond of children."

"Then just give me a kiss, if you please," said Barri, and he at once took one. "What would you have given for that?" he said to George.

Heloise was not in the least degree disconcerted. She laughed at George Drummond, keeping her hand on Barri's shoulder. "He is to come here often, I hear," she said. "Shall you always come with him?"

"Certainly, if it gives me the pleasure I have now."

"It is entirely mutual," she replied; "you will sit down until my aunt comes up. I have not met you before, and so I could never thank you for your great kindness to my aunt the first night she came here. Believe me, Mr. Drummond, that my aunt is a woman that requires the most delicate kindness, and those who show it to her shall have all that I can give them—my thanks."

"There is no such woman in the world as Mary Arnaud," said Barri; "by Jove, here she is!" and the next moment he had his arms round her neck.

She looked as handsome as ever, and sank down in her easy chair with the same exquisite grace. "I am so glad," she said, "that Barri has caused this new introduction between us, Mr. Drummond; though, indeed, I might have claimed your acquaintance after the first night we met, but I waited for you to move in what

I hope may be a lasting acquaintance. Your father," she continued, drawing Barri to her and stroking his hair, "was very kind to me once, before I retired from the world. Until I left that retirement and saw him again, I was unaware that he had a son. Lord Festiniog and Lord Rhyader speak of you in such high terms that I shall be proud to know you, not as a lodger, but as a friend. Come and see us as often as you can ; I am sure my niece will be glad to see you."

"Assuredly, Monsieur will be welcome, both for his own kindness to you, and for his father's."

"The fact is," said Mrs. Arnaud, "that my mother, Madame Merton, occupies the ground floor, and assists me, not only with capital, but with what is far better, her experience and taste. She, however, is old, and dislikes visitors, so I can better receive my friends here."

"She dislikes visitors so much," said Barri, "that she raises Cain because nobody ever comes to see her. I must go down and pay my respects before I come up again."

"You had better not," said Mrs. Arnaud ; but youth is rash, and he was gone.

George Drummond took his leave after twenty minutes' conversation, during which he explained that Barri and he had an old friendship, arising out of a stay which he had once made at Festiniog. But the deed was done ; he had entered that room an ambitious, careful, heart-whole man, with a dozen projects in his head for raising himself in the world. He left it with the same number of projects, but they were all now for another. His thoughts about his own future had passed away, except in so far as he might make a glorious future for Heloise.

Did she know it ? Did she know that the man was walking and breathing in a different atmosphere to that in which he had existed half-an-hour ago ? We think that she did.

He was a young man whom any one would have been proud of loving ; she could have loved him herself, had she not loved some one else. The most unfortunate fact was, that she had got into an awful entanglement elsewhere, and that she had told Mrs. Arnaud such a Mississippi of lies at first, that she could now neither ask for her sympathy nor advice, when she most needed them. She very nearly made a vow never to tell another story in her life, or only a certain number a day ; but when she saw how perfectly futile such a resolution would be, she gave up the idea ; for the little lady had, at least, this merit, that she knew her own character perfectly, and that though she deceived other people, she never deceived herself.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FAMILY CONSULTATION.

LORD FESTINIOG, Lord Rhyader, Lady Rhyader, Mr. Drummond, and Mr. George Drummond, sat down to dinner together : it was a family party, and more than one of them knew perfectly well that family affairs, and those only, were to be discussed.

Never having been in the ministry ourselves, we are unable to say what goes on at a meeting of cabinet ministers. We should be inclined to think that every one was either silent, or talked on indifferent matters, until the chief gave the key-note. Then, we should conceive, might follow a long and, sometimes, acrimonious argument, after the making up of which, her Majesty was advised. We know nothing about the matter, we only guess.

Every one present at Lord Festiniog's table knew perfectly well that Mrs. Arnaud and her relations were to be the subject of conversation. The gentle, and now middle-aged, Lady Rhyader knew the tact so well that she never offered to go away when the dessert was set on and the servants had withdrawn. She, in fact, relieved them all from the difficulty of beginning, by plunging *in medias res*.

"Now that we are alone together, Lord Festiniog," she said—"for I do not mind Mr. George Drummond—I wish to have a few words with you about Mrs. Arnaud."

"And why not?" said Lord Festiniog.

"That is no answer, sir. I want to know what you are going to do about her."

"I have acknowledged her as my daughter-in-law, and we ought to have her here."

"So I think. You have gone to such astounding lengths in this matter that you ought to go further; we ought not to do things by halves."

"Here's a woman for you," said Lord Festiniog, "has had the best dinner that money could buy, and then breaks out like this. What is the matter with you, Alice?"

"Never you mind, sir. You give me a fair answer to a fair question, and don't be diplomatic with *me*. I want to know what you are going to do about Mary?"

"Oh! I see what you mean. You want me to tell the truth."

"Exactly," said Lady Rhyader.

"Well, then, I will do anything you choose to propose."

"And so on," said Lady Rhyader. "Then you will ask her here."

"Certainly. She was always, as it were, one of the family when we were alone. No one knew but that she was some poor relation."

"And her mother and niece?"

"Of course. I will do anything which I am asked to do, if I am asked civilly."

"Well, then, I must civilly ask you not to have her mother and niece here. Do you understand?"

"Why?"

"I am mistress of this house, and I refuse to answer you. I will receive Mrs. Arnaud, but neither her mother nor her niece."

"May I not plead for the niece, Madam?" said George Drummond.

She rose and looked full at him; then they all rose as she went upstairs. George Drummond was nearest the door and opened it for her. As she passed him she said three words only to him in a low tone, and then passed out.

A moment after a footman came in and whispered to George Drummond. He went out. Lady Rhyader was standing on the staircase waiting for him.

"Mr. George Drummond," she said, hurriedly, "are you in love with that girl?"

"Yes."

"Then I will say no more. Is your decision irrevocable?"

"I fear so."

"Then God help you, my poor boy," and so she left him.

When he came back to the dining-room it was obvious that they had been saying something in his absence. They had evidently been talking about him, and as he did not want to stop their conversation, he made a pretence of finishing a glass of wine, and went upstairs to Lady Rhyader. We will remain in the dining-room for the present.

"Drummond," said Lord Festiniog, "have you been to see the widow lately?"

"No, my lord. I do not think that she wishes to see me."

"Want of taste on her part," said Lord Festiniog, "for you are a handsome and agreeable fellow still, Drummond."

"If you flatter me, Lord Festiniog, I shall begin to be disagreeable."

"Don't lose your temper, Drummond; that was always your fault, as it was the fault of your father before you."

"Well, you know that I cannot have much wish to see her. Our relations in old times were extremely painful."

"True," said Lord Festiniog, "what a singular thing it is that she should settle in the very house where your son was lodging."

"Well, that was my doing," said Drummond. "I sent her there."

"That you might go and see her sometimes, eh?" said Lord Festiniog.

"No. I have no wish to see her until she asks me, and that is not likely."

"Don't say anything more about that, father," said Lord Rhyader. "Is she likely to do well in this business, Drummond?"

"Yes. She will probably make her fortune; were it not so, I should not have sent her there."

"Who on earth could it have been," said Lord Festiniog, "who put her first on the truth about her being really married?"

"Her mother, doubtless," said Drummond, looking Lord Festiniog straight in the face.

"It most certainly was not the old lady, I should say," said Lord Rhyader. "At least, I do not think that it could have been. She never cared twopence about the matter; she thought that she had done her duty as a mother by pitching her daughter overboard. I saw her in Paris a year ago, and she was most affectionate to me. She did not harbour any ill-will to her daughter, but extremely lamented her loss to the business. I don't think that the old woman would have made or meddled in the matter. It must have been her brother who urged the rest of the family not to receive her."

"That is rather a lame conclusion, is it not?" said Drummond, who knew fifty times more about the matter than Rhyader.

"Possibly, but such is my instinct."

"Ay, but instincts are not business," said Drummond. "By-the-bye, talking of business, you have written to me to raise five hundred pounds for you. But you don't tell me on what security: is it on *post obit* or what?"

The sum was really £5,000, but Drummond withheld that fact: he wanted to hold the whip hand of Lord Rhyader, and he thought that this was the best way of doing so. He was completely mistaken in his tactics, and liked father and son none the better for the fact.

"You want money!" said Lord Festiniog, laughing. "What have you been doing? A saint like you in the money market:

that is too good. Come, pass the wine and tell us all about it. This is the best thing I have heard for some time."

"Well, sir, the fact is that I made a very foolish speculation. I am an avaricious man, and I put five thousand pounds in the Gulf Stream Company, believing that there was a subsidy. There is none, and I have lost my money: that is all."

"Why did not you come to me instead of going to Drummond? Don't let us pay it, Rhyader, my boy. Let us see if we can dispute it in law. Drummond, just see if we have any chance, and Rhyader and I will fight it. Or, if you hate publicity, Gervase, of course I will pay it; but I ask you, as a favour, to let Drummond get counsel's opinion. A lawsuit would be immense fun."

"I am bound both by gratitude and by duty to follow your directions, sir," said Rhyader.

"Then hey! for a good lawsuit, I say. I will find the sinews of war, and Drummond shall find the talent. Now, let us go up to your wife and George Drummond: he is no bottle breaker. You should tell him to take wine in moderation, Drummond, or he being unused to it might get overtaken by it."

"He has a will of his own in all matters, Lord Festiniog," was all that Drummond said.

They went upstairs. Lady Rhyader was ready with coffee, but George Drummond had disappeared. Lady Rhyader, in answer to their inquiries, said that he had a bad headache, and was gone home. They thought nothing about the matter.

"Where is Barri?" said Lord Festiniog. "He was not at dessert, and he is not here."

"He is at Mrs. Arnaud's, I believe. Mr. George Drummond left him there, and said that he would walk home with him. The boy wants a balloon, to let up with the gas, and Mrs. Arnaud's footman told him that he could tell him where to get one. He will be home soon."

"He is pretty familiar at Mrs. Arnaud's already," said Lord Festiniog.

"Oh, yes, he is there nearly every day. She treats him as if he were her own son. The boy is tiresome at home and I like his going there. He has a fancy for doing so, and I do not see why he should not."

CHAPTER XIV.

DRUMMOND THE ELDER.

DRUMMOND left Lord Festiniog's very early, and on getting to his study, was extremely surprised to find his son there with his head buried in his hands before the fire. He at once saw that something was wrong, and he approached George Drummond and put his hand on his shoulder.

"What is the matter, my boy?" he asked. "What has Lady Rhyader said which has given you a headache?"

"Now, you save me the trouble of coming to the point," said George Drummond. "She has been saying things which I do not understand."

"Well, tell me what she has said; if you cannot trust me, who can you trust?"

"Ay! but she says that you are the last man to be trusted; what am I to do if she says that again?"

"Tell her that she lies," said Drummond, very quietly. "No, you can't do that. But what has she been saying about me?"

"Well, I hardly like to tell you, father. We got in hot dispute over a certain matter, and lost our tempers. Then she said that you were the person who had put Mrs. Arnaud in possession of the facts of her marriage, and that you had set her on Lord Festiniog."

"She is a clever little woman," said Drummond, with an expression of admiration. "She is perfectly right."

"Father, did you do that?"

"Certainly, my son. You inherit all my property, and I have no idea of your marrying into a family with the curse of illegitimacy on it. You will marry Heloise, I suppose; at least, from what the boy Barri tells me, I should think it probable. If you decide on her, I wish her to be received into society. Barri tells me that you are *au mieux* with her; go on and prosper."

The transparency of this falsehood never struck George Drummond. He could not possibly have known that George would ever see Heloise, when he told Mrs. Arnaud the truth; therefore, how could he have betrayed his client for such a purpose? George never saw that until afterwards.

"I am in love with her, I confess, father, but she will never marry me. Lady Rhyader told me all about it to-night; Heloise knew my fellow lodger, D'Arcy, in Paris, most intimately. She has followed him here."

"That is an outrageous untruth," said Drummond. "What else did Lady Rhyader say?"

"She said that the whole thing between them was notorious in Paris, and that Madame Merton had in reality only come over to bring him to book."

"Now listen to me, George," said the elder Drummond. "Lady Rhyader is as incapable of telling lies intentionally as you are, but she believes them. All this story about D'Arcy is false, from beginning to end, by whom told I do not know. The whole thing is a fiction. I have got the key to it, but I don't know the whole truth. I will go and see the old woman to-morrow, and get it out of her. Now look here, boy, I have watched Mrs. Arnaud all her life, and I know everything about her and her relations. I tell you that there never was anything in the world between D'Arcy and Heloise. Will that satisfy you?"

"Well, no. I am afraid that there is something between them."

"I will look into that for you. I fancy that you are wrong. I conceive that there is a confidence between them, but that it is about some other person I don't know. I will get it out of the old woman to-morrow."

"What, Madame Merton?" said George; "she is a difficult customer, I fancy."

"Fiddle!" said Drummond; "ask her how much money she owes me; she will cast her old wig on the fire."

"Owe you money?"

"Yes, boy. Like all Frenchwomen, she speculated under the Empire, and I, having certain designs in hand, made friends with her, and lent certain sums to her. She has naturally not repaid them, though she could do so if she chose. I will just go to her to-morrow, and hear what she has to say. The threads of a very vast matter are in my hands, George; when I have got them together, I will use my power for your interest."

"But, father, you are scheming about something. Pause, and think how happy we might be without any attempt to go higher in the world."

"Who told you that I was scheming?"

"Your face. I know it well; you are hiding something from me."

"I am."

"Confide to me, father."

"I cannot; I have committed a great crime, and I dare not tell you of it."

"Why?"

"Because you would cast me away as the dirt under your feet, if I told you."

"Father! father! why should you say that to me? Of myself I say nothing. I have tried to do my duty by you, and you will allow that I have never failed in it."

"Never for a moment," said Drummond.

"As for your duty to me, what can I say about that? Why, I have not words to express what I owe you. No man had ever such a father as you have been to me. Believe me, that I love and trust you beyond all living men, and that everything which you say to me is sacred. Let me share your sorrow or your crime; do not, after so many years of kindness, entirely repel me from your heart."

"You are talking like a madman," said Drummond, "and you are driving me mad. I cannot say any more to-night. You shall marry the girl if money can do it, but I will not urge you to marry her if she loves some one else. Now, go home to Number Seventeen, look up Madame Merton, if she is not gone to bed, and tell her that I am coming to see her to-morrow. You may say that I want £1,500 of her, and that will make her civil."

"But, father," said George Drummond, recurring to the very singular revelation which Mr. Drummond had made, "won't you confide in me?"

Drummond looked at him pensively for a minute, and then said, "I cannot do it, my boy. I cannot part with you, at least not yet."

"But, father, I would go to the scaffold for you. Lay your hand on my heart, and see how true it beats."

"Go away, old boy."

"Father, I would almost give up Heloise for your sake."

"No, by no means. You must know nothing. I have an object to gain, and then——"

"And what then?"

"Would you do anything which I asked you?"

"Why, of course I would."

"Murder?"

"Why no," said George Drummond, laughing. "But I would do anything to oblige you. Well, now, I will really go; I shall bring you to confidence some day;" and he went.

Drummond the elder sat over the fire, and thought deeply, but without any result. Undecided in purpose he had always been: he was never more so than now, when he held the cards in his hands, or at least thought that he did so.

He never had been married, save once for a very short time. He had lived with more than one woman for a time, but he had never loved one of them; the only woman he had ever cared for in his life was Mrs. Arnaud; and she seemed as far away from him as ever. In fact, she seemed to get a growing dislike to him. He had asked himself often why this was, and now he began to see the answer.

She was a woman of singular loyalty and truthfulness in her way; although she had a latent genius for fiction, scarcely inferior to that of Heloise, which she only used when required by extreme necessity; and she could not trust him.

It was he that had made love to her during the time that he was married. It was he who, for the sake of putting her under an obligation, had found out the fact of her having been married. He had betrayed Lord Festiniog in doing this, and had been false to him about it since. But he had got no nearer to Mrs. Arnaud's heart. She despised him for the treachery which had benefited her.

His affection for George Drummond was singularly strong. A lonely man all his life, George Drummond, with his innocence and talent, both as boy and as man, had been a great pleasure to him. He wanted to do that young man a great service, and himself a greater. He wished to marry Mrs. Arnaud, even though she hated him. It seems strange, but it was so; we see the thing every day if we look for it. His last chance for gaining his object was in George Drummond—and in murder. It is no use disguising the fact. A certain life, as he thought, stood between him and his object; and that life must go. There was no actual necessity for it, but a secret which will leak out soon about him will account for his folly. He could never think on a certain subject consecutively.

Yet in most things he was a respectable man. He had an excellent practice and a most excellent income. He had more business than he knew how to get through with; yet it was observed, by those who cared about his affairs, that he had not made his son a lawyer but a gentleman, as if the two things were totally incompatible, which, we are happy to say, is not the case. He had not used his son's great talents by educating him for the law, and taking him into practice. He had other designs for him, and his business friends thought him a fool, for George Drummond could have made the business twice what it was. "Why, then, was he kicking his heels at the Home Office?" they asked.

His father desired no confidant in his business; it is the oldest story in the world. One man was mad about one woman, and

there was a wild and ever-fading chance of her, through carefully-planned assassination.

"If I fail in that," he said, "I will kill her, and then myself. I am not sure that I had better do both those things this very night. I would do it, only I have some lingering superstition about the next world. However, the cub shall go; that will pave the way.

"How on earth shall I ever get into the household? There will be the difficulty. If I could only get them to Italy I could do it, or rather she could; but there is no chance of it."

The dexterous, keen-headed lawyer was left without any power of decision whatever.

Murder "tired at the pin," but the murder must be done by another hand; and there was only one which he could command. It never struck the man that wealth, honour, and virtue would be in the end too strong for him. Least of all did it strike him that Nature would in this case invade civilisation, and solve the matter in her own peculiar way.

Let him disappear for the present, ready for any mischief, but not quite sure of his means. Charged with 100 lb. of compressed gun-cotton, let us leave him to go off under the bottom of that very safe ship the "Festiniog."

CHAPTER XV.

MOVEMENTS AT NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

THE pleasant and almost whimsical life of Mrs. Arnaud went on. She had seen trouble, and serious trouble, nay, had been close upon tragedy. Now, however, her ship was sailing with a perfectly fair wind in a tolerably smooth sea. If any one had told her of great danger, she would have smiled; had any one told her that the quiet, middle-aged lawyer Drummond was prepared to blow her and others into the air, she would have laughed.

There was a great attraction towards Number Seventeen, to all the people we have mentioned. Barri began to discover that he was one of the most popular persons in the establishment. Mrs. Arnaud had always been fond of him. Heloise liked him because he was impudent and handsome, and because she could get anything out of him which she chose. Rachel liked everything young,

and so liked him. The maid liked him because he made love to her, and the footman liked him because he was told off to take him to toy shops, and so escaped much of his duty. Toy shops we said; say rather the theatres at the morning performance and the Crystal Palace itself. Barri and Mrs. Arnaud's young footman saw a great deal of life together.

Not that Barri was ever out after dark. Lady Rhyader was very particular on that subject, as was also Mrs. Arnaud. The heir to a vast fortune was not to be trifled with, more particularly, because in case of anything happening to the boy Barri, there was no possible heir, and the title was extinct. The boy was treated by all as though he was a moss rose done up in silver paper. And he knew his value too; his father and mother Rhyader, were answerable for that.

He was a very good little fellow, affectionate, shrewd beyond belief, but over-grown and not over-strong. He seemed to take mostly to George Drummond, Mrs. Arnaud, and Madame Merton; and one charming fact about Barri was, that he always carefully repeated in one society what he had heard in another.

"How do you do, Madame Merton?" he would say, dashing into the back-parlour, the same room in which Mrs. Arnaud had undergone her penance on the first night of her arrival.

And "Comment vous portez-vous, petit vaurien?" would madame reply.

"You are not polite, madame," replied Barri. "What a pity it is that your rheumatism does not allow you to go upstairs."

"Why, monsieur?"

"There is better fun upstairs than there is down here. I say, Madame Merton."

"Well."

"Is Heloise going to marry D'Arcy or George? Because she seems to be setting her cap at both. Grandpa says that Mrs. Arnaud will ultimately marry Mr. Drummond. Now a woman with such a noble wig as yours ought to have some sense under it. If I was in your place I should set them all right."

So the boy went away, and the old woman prepared to make herself disagreeable to Lord Festiniog. She wrote him a letter which she knew would bring him, and began packing for a journey to Paris.

He arrived at the most busy time of the afternoon; he was uncertain as to which way he had better get at her, and like many people who deliberate, he took the most foolish course. He went into the shop.

He had no time to ask for her. She bore down on him full

sail, threw her arms round his neck, kissed him, and addressed him in the most friendly and affectionate terms before every one; then with an enormous amount of loudly-expressed anxiety, she swept him into the parlour, leaving the whole affair to be talked of all over London for the next week, and find what solution it could.

She had succeeded in her object of publicly annoying him; now she took a turn at him in private. If the unhappy nobleman had anything to say for himself, she gave him no time to say it. She had called him there by a letter which urged private matters of the highest interest as the object of the interview. The private and confidential matter was that Mrs. Arnaud's footman was teaching Barri to drink, and that she as a mother could not depart for Paris without telling his lordship of the state of the case. Her daughter, she said, was a fool and a most ungrateful fool, as silly and weak now as she was when she married that brigand-looking son of his, Iltyd. (She had never seen him, and he was of a singularly frank and pleasing aspect.) Next, she said that she was going to Paris because she could not stay any longer in a house where such things went on, as were going on upstairs. D'Arcy and George Drummond were both in love with Heloise, and her ingrate of a daughter favoured George Drummond, while Heloise herself was attached to D'Arcy. So she scolded on, and in the course of time came to George Drummond's father. The son, according to her, was a disreputable spendthrift, but he was a saint to Drummond himself. She had been forced to borrow money of him in consequence of the ruin brought on her by her daughter's alliance with his family, and what interest she paid on it she declined to tell; his lordship would not believe it if she did. (As she did not pay any interest at all, and as Drummond had no earthly security for it, Lord Festiniog would have been extremely surprised had he known that such a shrewd person as Drummond had let her have it on such terms, even though he did happen to admire her daughter.)

Now, all this affected Lord Festiniog very slightly, he trusted Mary Arnaud, George, and the boy perfectly well, though he had not yet made any great acquaintance with George, whom Rhyader still disliked. The old woman, whose object was simply to make every one uncomfortable, through the head of the family, saw this, and shot her last bolt, which hit.

She said that she had the greatest dislike to betray her own daughter, but that she would never see a viper plotting against Lord Festiniog's peace of mind, now that he had done justice to her old, and hitherto respectable family. Then she finally, and

beyond doubt, proved to him what she knew was the truth, that Drummond was a traitor to him, that it was he who had told Mrs. Arnaud of the legality of her marriage.

"Can you prove that, madame?" said he.

"Tax *him* with it; or, stay milord, tax *her* with it, and see what answer either of them dares to give."

"I am very much obliged to you for your information, madame, which I am sure is given with the best intentions. May I ask you the favour of the loan of one of your rings?"

Madame made the *emprunt* with the greatest alacrity, and was so eager to get the ring off, that in the struggle she gave herself a muscular strain in the back: the effect of this was, that she accompanied the presentation of the ring by a wild and dismal howl, such as only rheumatism can produce.

The un pitying and brutal insular old booby (that was what she called him to herself) took no notice of her yell, and departed with the ring, returning almost immediately with another in addition, of which he begged her acceptance. As, next to dress and mischief-making, she liked jewellery better than anything else in the world, she would have risen and embraced Lord Festiniog, but she was afraid of another rick in her back; because she knew that when one came, another was pretty sure to follow, and it would not have done for her to have given a war-whoop just as she was kissing him. She therefore gave him her benediction, and put on her ring, after which they parted with mutual satisfaction, and saw one another no more in this world.

Lord Festiniog ascertained from Heloise that Mrs. Arnaud was upstairs alone. He went up by himself, and found her sitting by the window resting. When she saw him she came towards him with her old, frank, pleasant smile. He was half disarmed before he opened his mouth, but she saw that there was a cloud on his face, and she took his hands and looked wonderingly into it.

"Mary," he said, "have you always been frank with me?"

"Yes," she said, with a pause; "I think so."

"Who was it who told you of your marriage, and set you on me?"

"Oh! you have found *that* out," she said. "Well—I am not at all sure that I am sorry. I do not ask you who told you, only you can bear me out that I did not. I bound myself in honour to him, and even now his name is not mentioned."

"Nor shall it be," said he: "do you trust him?"

"No! He put me in possession of the fact in hopes that I would marry him. I need not say what answer I gave."

"Do you think he has some scheme in hand still, of which you are the object?"

"I fancy so, but I cannot tell what it is. He has two pair of eyes on him now, however, yours and mine. Sit down, and let us talk a little more. You have been with my mother; what sort of a character has she given me?"

"The character of a poor, weak saint, surrounded on all sides by harpies and villains. Your footman, I gather, is teaching Barri to drink; your lodgers are quarrelling about your niece; I forget the rest."

"What a shame! The young man is an excellent young man, and as for my lodgers quarrelling about Heloise, they are very good friends, and I hope will remain so. I admit them both, certainly, D'Arcy because he knew Heloise in Paris, and George Drummond because he is here with Barri, who thinks him the best of created beings, after his own family, of course."

"Are either of them *épousés* with Heloise?"

"I fancy both of them, to a certain extent. But you must remember that I should be the last person to see to what extent. Before me, of course, there is nothing but politeness."

"What do you think of George Drummond?" said Lord Festiniog.

"I like him amazingly, now. I did not care much for him at first; his manner is cold, but when the crust of him is got through, you will not find a more affectionate or warm-hearted fellow anywhere. I wish you would see more of him. He is such an admirable companion for Barri, and the boy takes to him."

"Barri and he are old friends, and I will see more of him. But Rhyader says that he is such a prig."

"Well," said Mrs. Arnaud, "Gervase ought to know better about that matter than I can pretend to do, for he is the king of prigs himself. I cannot say that I find George Drummond to be anything of the sort. I should pass *him* as a gentleman."

"Would you pass Rhyader as one, Mary?"

"Well—h'm—yes, I suppose so. Much as I would pass you. I think Rhyader, by his birth and position, fancies that he can take liberties which would not be allowed to other people. You do it yourself, you know, and it is not to be tolerated."

"Well, Mary, I will not do it any more: let us be friends."

"By all means. I desire nothing more. I thought we were, for we have gone through much together with only one quarrel. Surely we are friends. But stay a moment before you go. Are you aware that Rhyader and his wife distrust Drummond?"

"I have a suspicion of it, but I do not like to talk about it—it causes words. He is a good man of business, and I do not wish

to part with him. He was shamefully served by his wife, but I fear he has served one woman, at least, very badly. Did you ever hear of a woman called Perrot?"

"No. Stay! My servant at Leghorn and at Ravenna married a Frenchman called Perrot. I wonder if it is the same woman."

"It does not matter much," said Lord Festiniog. "She was dunning me for money, saying that she knew something. I sent her to Drummond as my legal adviser. Since then she has been very quiet; and Drummond has confessed to me that he was in intimate relations with her at one time."

"So he was," said Mrs. Arnaud. "She was my maid. I should like to see her again. She was with me when my poor child died. She was with me during the whole of that horrible fever at Ravenna. I really should like to see the woman."

"Well, it is possible that you may, if she ever wants any money," said Lord Festiniog. "What do you say to my going?"

"You may go if you like, but I would much rather that you stayed. Stay ten minutes, will you?"

"Why, yes. The sight of your honest, handsome face would make me stay any time."

"Quite so; and we will consider the rest understood. I want you to see a face more pleasant than mine."

"That of Heloise?"

"I do not say no to that. But the face I wish you to see just now is of another kind. It is familiar to you, and yet you seem scarcely to know it."

"Who is it?"

"George Drummond. He is downstairs; let me fetch him, and leave you to talk to him."

"I have no objection; but with what object?"

"I wish to bring you together; that is all."

"Let him come if you like," he replied; and she went. George Drummond was not long in coming.

"Well, George," said Lord Festiniog, "that mysterious Mrs. Arnaud says that she wants me to see more of you. I suppose I must, for she always has her own way."

"I shall be only too happy to see as much of your lordship as you choose," said George, "for one reason, if for no other."

"And that?"

"And that is, that I have a very great affection for Barri Arnaud, and I think that I have more influence over him than any one else—an influence which I need not tell you I should use for good. The boy has high purposes, which it does not seem to me any of his family understand. He is a petulant, spoilt boy,

but with a great deal of good in him. I wish that I was his tutor; in fact, I wish that I was anything but what I am; and if I might see more of the boy, I might prevent his life from being ruined as mine has been; nay, I could not do that, but he would be a companion to me in my unutterable desolation."

"But, *George Drummond*," said Lord Festiniog, "what is the use of talking in this manner? There is not a young man in England with finer prospects. Your father is rich; you are an only son; he tells me the scheme he has thought out so shrewdly for your future. He says that you have accepted that future, and have great ambition; there is nothing to prevent your being an ambassador, or, if you choose to spend your cash in that way, a member of parliament."

"A month ago, my lord, I had high purposes: now I have simply none."

"Ah!" said Lord Festiniog: "I see. *Mademoiselle Heloise* has been asked if she will share your future, and prefers a military life:—is that it?"

"No, I have not spoken to her, as I know it would be hopeless. I have seen too much."

"Well, perhaps she does like some one else better—that cannot be helped, can it?"

"No, but life is valueless to me."

"Well," said Lord Festiniog, "if any one had told me this, I would certainly not have believed it. A sensible young fellow like you to talk this to me. Why, man, you have scarcely seen her a month, and you can't be so hard hit as all this comes to. I have been ten times worse off than ever you have. You will get over it, man (*I have, twice*), and wonder why you were ever such a fool."

George Drummond politely declined to allow the possibility of his ever getting over it, or of his ever putting faith in woman again.

"Then there is something you do not choose to tell me about," said Lord Festiniog.

George Drummond was obliged to confess that there was.

"Then I will ask no more questions. I am sorry for you. If you like to make love to *Barri* to console yourself, I will use my influence in your favour. *Rhyader* does not like you as he ought to, yet, but he soon will if I abuse you to him; the heir to the throne is always in opposition you know. *Lady Rhyader*, I think, is as fond of you as she is of any one: the *Ormerods* are never demonstrative. If you repeat carefully everything which we say to one another behind each other's backs you will soon be the

most trusted friend in the family circle. Well, good-bye, don't be downhearted. Come whenever you like. I think that I shall make sure of a warm welcome for you."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MYSTERY OF D'ARCY AND HELOISE.

THERE was something more about Heloise than George Drummond had chosen to tell Lord Festiniog. A very black suspicion about her had been unfortunately confirmed beyond all manner of doubt, in his mind, and he did not care whether he lived or died. We have a hesitation in explaining what the matter was, yet we must do so, or the reader will be as much puzzled as George Drummond was; and, what is worse, will think that there is something wrong, something which should not be told, in the most innocent and romantic business in the world.

D'Arcy had met in London, and very much admired, a certain young lady of very high birth and fortune. He thought that he was very much in love with her, and he followed her to Paris. She liked him well enough, but there was but little chance of her family consenting to her marriage with a comparatively poor man like D'Arcy. Still, opposition only made them like one another more, and they came to a clandestine correspondence.

Heloise was at this time in Brittany. The young lady was so closely watched by her friends, that correspondence was difficult. But a French friend, in whom D'Arcy confided, informed him of what was pretty well known elsewhere—namely, that Madame Merton, of the Rue St. Honoré, had for many years managed affairs of that kind for her customers, and charged for her services proportionately in her bill.

"She will not undertake an affair, you know," said his French friend. "The old woman is a dragon of virtue. But for an honourable matter like yours, she is the most convenient and sensible person in Paris, which is the same thing as saying in the universe. Still, you must pay, my child, and you say that you are not rich."

"Oh! I am tolerably well off," said D'Arcy; "but how do you manage with the old woman?"

"Let me look at your pocket-handkerchief," said his French

friend. "Bah!" he said, "this is not in the fashion at all; I would not ask my valet to dust his boots with it. You must have a new set, and, like all the world, have them embroidered at the corner with your monogram. All the world does it, and Madame Merton has a *spécialité* for such work: they will cost you thirty-five francs a-piece, but you must pay to win."

"Good; and what next?" said D'Arcy.

"Why, you get into discussion with Madame, you pay beforehand, and give her one of your own handkerchiefs for a pattern; in that handkerchief is the letter you wish forwarded. It will reach its destination."

"How?"

"Faith, how am I to say? It is her business, not mine. She gets her share out of the young lady also. She gets much expensive custom in this way, that is all I know. Only, mind that you never make an appointment to meet the young lady, or she will denounce you at once."

"But how does she know what there is in the letters she passes on?"

"How does she know?" said the Frenchman, contemptuously. "Do you suppose that she does not read every word of them before she sends them? Why, if anything wrong were discovered with her hand in it, it would ruin her, easy-going as we are in Paris."

D'Arcy's expensive friendship with Madame Merton was begun in this way. His suit did not very greatly prosper, for he never had the chance of meeting the young lady in private, and, warned by his friend's experience, he never dared to hint at such a thing in a letter. His acquaintance with Madame became more expensive after a short time, for Heloise returned from Brittany, and he was thrown against her in the course of business.

From that moment the young lady was forgotten. He grew cool with a rapidity for which even she could not account; but in reality she was not broken-hearted, as she had seen some one who was much richer, and whom she liked better. D'Arcy's affections had been transferred to Heloise, and in talking to her about his passion for the young lady for whom he cared no longer, he got into the most confidential relations with her.

What should have made her love him so suddenly? Who can say? There was not much in the man; he was handsome and agreeable; he talked French well; he dressed well. He was only an Englishman after all; yet there was a *je ne sais quoi* about him which made him more attractive to her than any other man she had ever seen. She had plenty of young Frenchmen

who paid her attention, and who were better dressed and better mannered than he was. Yet she chose him from among them all. For his wealth? no: he was not singularly rich. For his beauty? why, he had only the ordinary good looks of a well trained and bred Englishman. For his talents? he was not very clever; he could hold his own and no more. She was stupid, save in her exquisite power of management; most half-educated Frenchwomen—we shall be getting into trouble—what we were going to say is that most half-educated women of all nations seem stupid, because they have no facts to reason from. She was stupid, we repeat; and he knew more than she did. On occasion he could tell her of things which had never been told her during her convent education. The young Frenchmen who had paid her attention could make themselves more agreeable than D'Arcy ever did. Yet there was the *je ne sais quoi* about him—and—she fell in love with him.

He came and went for some time. Her time with her grandmother was not a pleasant one. She was a woman of business, and she calculated D'Arcy's affairs. They were sufficient for her, and in the end he asked her to be affianced to him: she consented.

At about this time, her aunt Arnaud, who was seldom spoken of in the family, began the fight with Lord Festiniog, which ended in her recognition. Madame Merton at once took her daughter's part, as far as she could, though she could do little for her daughter save vituperation, which did Mrs. Arnaud no good at all. Even before Mrs. Arnaud was recognised, Madame Merton on Heloise's proposition that she should go to England to help her aunt, gave her ready consent. It is no use repeating what we have hinted at previously.

But matters between D'Arcy and Heloise had gone very far. She told him that her aunt was taking such and such a house, that it was probable that she would be sent for to help in the business, and so on. D'Arcy went to London and took the lodgings. He came into them only a few days before Mrs. Arnaud.

Her position was extremely difficult. The fact was that D'Arcy had married Heloise in Paris, and neither of them dared confess the fact to any human being. He dared not confess it to his family, nor she to hers. They were man and wife, however, according to all laws, human and divine.

She came with a smiling face to assist Mrs. Arnaud in the business. She assisted her in the noblest manner, and she sat, like a little Burgundian as she was, opposite Mrs. Arnaud day after day, and night after night, wondering when she would get

the courage to tell the truth. Then her grandmother came, and frightened her still more. And George Drummond came and fell in love with her, which made a complication which was beyond her powers to solve.

D'Arcy behaved very well. He began to wish that the marriage should be known to his family, but she begged him, for a time, to say nothing about it, unless—certain contingencies should occur. He agreed to that; but in concealed marriages things are apt to be misunderstood by those not in the possession of the real facts.

George Drummond and D'Arcy had made a sort of friendship together. George had been the oldest lodger in the house, and, during the interregnum between Mrs. Morsey and Mrs. Arnaud, had naturally made acquaintance with him, as a newly-arrived lodger. George had no special information from his father about Mrs. Arnaud; such as he had he gave to D'Arcy. There was no need for the two young men to talk about family affairs in any way. They neither of them had a *point d'appui*, they simply made friends. Mrs. Arnaud came, and they talked of her. Heloise came, Madame came, Lord Festiniog came, and Barri. George Drummond and D'Arcy talked over them all in the most free and easy manner. More freely possibly after the advance of Madame sent them upstairs into Mrs. Arnaud's rooms, where George Drummond was free to meet Heloise, and D'Arcy was free to meet his wife.

George Drummond had determined for some little time to ask D'Arcy about his love for Heloise. He had delayed doing so because he was afraid. He saw that they admired one another.

Yet it would be better surely to speak to him about it. He resolved to do so, and at ten o'clock one night he came down to D'Arcy's rooms to speak about the matter.

D'Arcy was not in his sitting-room, but the door of his bedroom was open. There were two people talking and laughing there; one of them was D'Arcy, the other Heloise. D'Arcy was sitting in a chair, and Heloise was standing behind him, brushing his hair. George slid out of the room without making a sound.

Life was now of no value to him. Look at it for yourself, reader; conceive how unutterably horrible it would be in your own case, and think well of him. In some men such a thing would have produced brutality, ferocity: in him it only produced heroism; and, we think, heroism of the highest kind.

With D'Arcy and Heloise we will trouble you very little. We

do not think that there is anything very much to trouble about with them. We only ask you to go forward with George Drummond.

CHAPTER XVII.

GEORGE DRUMMOND TAKES CHARGE OF BARRI.

ALL things, as the Scotch say, seemed to be put past him. He had never loved any woman but Heloise, and she—it was not to be borne, and yet it must be. That that frank, beautiful creature should be unfit to be named was horrible. Yet she was talking familiarly to his friend in his friend's bedroom. He had seen it with his own eyes; he saw it through the open door, against his will. She was in his bedroom, brushing his hair, late at night. French manners might be free, but never so free as that. To us, who know the truth, the matter is harmless enough, but to him it was unbearable.

He also heard her say to him, "You have inked your cuff again, you very imbecile noodle; you lay your pen down on the desk, and then put your arm in the ink. You are incomparably foolish."

So it was all over, as he told Lord Festiniog. It was necessary to shape out some new life for himself.

What career was there conceivable for him? What should he do now? He had partially failed at the university, and he had hopelessly failed in love. Could he trust a woman after his experience of Heloise? He thought not. He put women aside altogether, and thought, once more, of a career in life.

But for whom? As a totally unselfish person, he could not decide.

He had got to be very fond of Mrs. Arnaud, but, when all was said and done, what was she? A handsome milliner, nothing more. Yet, sometimes, he remembered that she had ventured to kiss him, and that he liked her doing so. He rambled on in idle thought of this kind, and ended by wishing that he was king of England, under which circumstances he fancied that he could put all things right. Then he went to sleep, and was awakened late in the morning by Barri rousing him out of bed with Mrs. Arnaud's dog, and requesting to be taken to the Crystal Palace, dog and all.

He took Barri to the Crystal Palace, and they had a long day together. It was after this that he spoke to Lord Festiniog. That excellent old man gave him all the comfort in his power, but it was none. He moped and brooded by himself a great deal, dreading to meet either D'Arcy or Heloise, who seemed also to avoid him. As for Mrs. Arnaud, though he liked her, and she liked him, he dared not be much with her after what he had discovered about her niece. The responsibility was too heavy. He made a certain discovery also, without interchanging a word. That woman Rachel knew what was going on between D'Arcy and Heloise : she looked so guiltily at him. Yet, could *he* speak and warn Mrs. Arnaud ? He was the very last man who could possibly do so.

The boy Barri had always taken very kindly to him, and now they got greater friends than ever. Lord Festiniog had said to George Drummond that he would abuse George to Rhyader, in order to make sure that that gentleman would get to like him in consequence. He did nothing of the kind, however, but praised George so steadily that Lord and Lady Rhyader saw much more of him, and got to appreciate him.

He was very much with them after a short time. The truth which he supposed that he knew about Heloise drove him from Number Seventeen almost entirely, and he found in his new friends, who had been old acquaintances, people much more kindly and agreeable than he had ever thought. He never mentioned his terrible disappointment, but Lord Festiniog hinted enough about it to make them pity him, and to render them very kind to him.

He seemed to make a home at Festiniog House ; and his father approved of his doing so. Drummond said that George would get into good society, might make a man of the world, might make useful friends—might, in fact, do everything except what he, Drummond, wished to be done.

What was that ? Time only can tell.

George saw his father frequently ; and the more he saw of him, the more he was puzzled. His father, Drummond, who had always been frank and kind to him, now became a perfect sphinx. He tried to talk to him about strange things ; things which George had never heard of before. He said something so very odd one day that George came to the conclusion that his father was getting a little mad, and that he could not trust him.

It was a curious thing for a son to do about his father, but he did it. He consulted Lord Festiniog. He asked that gentleman if he could tell him anything about his grandfather.

Lord Festiniog was very loath to say anything at first, and wished to change the subject. But George Drummond stuck to his point, and at last Lord Festiniog told him the truth.

"My dear young friend," he said. "Providence afflicts in various ways. You ask about your grandfather. Will you ask about mine?"

"No, my lord."

"Very well, then, I suppose I must tell you about both of them. My grandfather was a hopeless criminal, a man who, in these purer times, is never named. Yours, my poor boy, was a lunatic, and died in Bedlam."

"Have you ever, my lord, seen any symptoms of lunacy in my father?"

"No," said Lord Festiniog. "Madness misses a generation. It is your turn, not his."

"I think that my turn has come, for there are matters which I cannot understand."

"There is no doubt about that," said Lord Festiniog. "I should conceive that you were as mad as a hatter. I am not excessively sane, myself; in fact, I fancy that I am going mad. Do not you think that a little change would be good for you? it might keep off the disease, you know. What is it, after all? merely congenital tubercular disease of the brain; I expect that I have got it. Now, we will talk no more nonsense. What do you think of me, George?"

"I think of you—well, give me time—I think of you first as a kind patron."

"Yes, but what more?"

"What more?" said George Drummond, "that is a curious question. Do you mean personally?"

"Yes."

"I think of you as a very excellent nobleman. As a Radical myself," he said, smiling, "I object to noblemen theoretically, but I go as far as to say that I think that if all noblemen were like yourself, we should require no Reform Bills. But, then, you see they are not."

"Quite so," said Lord Festiniog, "you will get over this Radicalism in time; if you do not, it will sit very pleasantly on you. Well, now, I see you trust me, and will do as I ask you. I want you to do something for me."

"It is done, my lord."

"No, it is not, George. It has to be done."

"Mention it then."

"Take away this boy Barri for us. Be his tutor. Get

him entirely out of the way, and answer for his life with your own."

"This is very puzzling, my lord."

"Yes, as a matter of course it is puzzling," said Lord Festiniog, "you need hardly remark that. I want you to take away this boy, for a time, until I can see into matters."

"What matters, my lord?"

"I really hardly know myself," said he.

"I could not do anything without my father's consent, my lord."

"Who asked you? I only ask you to take the boy away while I deal with the woman."

"What woman?"

"I am coming to that: now I have been appealed to by two young people to break a matter to you, and ask your confidence. You had reason to suspect that a flirtation was on between D'Arcy and Heloise."

"How could you know that?"

"Rachel, the spy and confidant, saw you coming from D'Arcy's room on one occasion. She informed them of the fact, and, after considerable deliberation, they came to me as one having some weight, and asked me to break the truth to you. They were married in Paris four months ago."

"Married! And does Mrs. Arnaud know?"

"Not a word. I am to have the inestimable privilege of telling her, when Mrs. D'Arcy overcomes her almost unreasonable repugnance to my doing so."

"Well!" he said with a sigh, "I am glad that she was honest. But, however, the sooner I am away, the better."

"I am glad that you see that. She is a good young woman, of whom you should never think again. I don't exactly see, now that I know all, what there is in her; but she drives the young fellows mad."

"Well!"

"Well," is not much to say to a man in my position. You should say, 'Well, my lord,' or, 'I profoundly appreciate and esteem your lordship's confidence,' or, 'You are an old noodle and are frightening yourself about nothing'; anything but 'Well.'"

"I don't know what you are driving at, my lord."

"How, on earth, can I tell you if I do not know myself? I cannot confide to Rhyader and his wife, they would either laugh at me, or have a series of fits, or do something or another ridiculous. I want the boy taken away, and I want you to do it."

"Is there any danger to him?"

"I think so. I have received anonymous letters which puzzle me. It seems a very strange thing for an old man like myself to tell you in broad daylight, in this most prosaic and, I might say, police-ridden town, London—but I fear that the boy's life is in danger."

"That is very strange. My dear lord, you must have some reason for speaking. Is it not some scheme to extort money?"

"Why, apparently not; that is one of the puzzles of it; not a stiver of money has been demanded of me. I am only warned that the boy's life is in danger, and that he had better be got out of London."

"But no one can have any interest in the boy's harm. It seems absurd to ask, but you positively have no other heir?"

"None. The boy Barri is the last descendant, in the male line, of the sister of Giraldus Cambrensis. The title is extinct with him, and the estates might be left by Rhyader to build a church if anything happened to Barri."

"I fancy—only fancy—this, Lord Festiniog. There must be some collateral branch, the representatives of which are unscrupulous. Some conscientious person has found out what they aim at, and has warned you."

"Man! man! there is *no* collateral branch. The head of the Barrys might try some wild claim, but he and all his family are pre-eminently respectable, and besides, we have not been even related for three hundred years."

"Some old charter may exist," said George Drummond.

"That answers itself. If that is the case, why was the claim not made on my accession, or why is it not made now?"

That seemed unanswerable. George Drummond resumed the conversation by saying,

"Well, Lord Festiniog, I am deeply attached to Barri, and he to me. I will take him anywhere you like, and leave you and Lord Rhyader to solve the mystery, for I am fairly puzzled. Where shall we go?"

"Take him to France and teach him the language, or indeed, anywhere you like. As for money, I find that."

"Will Lord Rhyader not object?"

"Why, no," said Lord Festiniog, rubbing his chin.

"The fact is that Barri is too lively for them, when he is at home, and I fancy that they would not object to have him elsewhere. They have no vitality, and Barri has too much. There will be no difficulty there, particularly as I pay. Rhyader is a screw, and if he can give his boy a foreign tour for nothing, he is the very man to acquiesce. *She* won't offer any opposition I

warrant you. But mind that you and I are in entire confidence; not a word of what I have said to you must escape your mouth."

"You may trust me entirely," said George Drummond; and so the thing was settled.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TUTOR AND PUPIL.

"BARRI," said George to him, as he met him at the door next morning, "I want to speak to you very seriously; what are you learning at school?"

Barri enumerated all human knowledge as given in the celebrated summary of Plato, and mentioned, moreover, French and German, in addition to the accomplishments of the ancient Greek philosophers; the fact being, that he knew nothing, except how to ride, to swim, to row, and to fight, and even those things indifferently. He was not a fool, and tolerably diligent, but he had desired to be everything, and was nothing. Lord Festiniog said that he had got such a smattering of everything that he would make a most admirable third-rate debater, and would consequently come to an evil end.

George walked with him along the street towards the Regent's Park, and insisted on speaking French to him. The boy could understand him after one or two repetitions, but he could not answer him.

"In your position," said George, "you ought, at least, to have French at your fingers' ends; and you can't talk it."

"I could learn to talk it," said Barri, "if I went abroad."

"Would you like to go abroad?" said George.

"Yes, I should, very much."

"Would you like to go abroad with me?"

"That would be too good a thing even to dream of," said Barri.

"My boy, we all dream. I have dreamt a little too much, and my dream has not come true."

"Ay!" said Barri, "you mean about Heloise; but you will dream about some one else some day, and your dream will come most perfectly true."

"So you think, my child. But are you ready to come abroad with me?"

"You are the only man I ever cared about," said Barri, "ex-

cept, of course, my father and your father. But what is the use of talking about it? It cannot be done. Father would not mind: I don't think that he can call his soul his own. Mamma would not mind very much, because I know she likes me to be away sometimes. She would be sorry if anything happened to me, but I am not good company for her, as I know too well. Grandpa likes me, and would never trust me out of his sight. He is lord and master, and he would never consent for an instant."

"But, Barri," said George, "he desires it."

"All right," said Barri; "I have nothing more to say. If he chooses to make me happy, I shall offer no objection. I don't believe that pa is grandpa's son."

"Why?"

"I don't know; they are so utterly different. Pa does not care so much about me as grandpa does."

"Well, you are not a very easy subject, Barri. You are very rude."

"Was I ever rude to you or grandpa?"

"No."

"That was because you or grandpa were never rude to me. My father and mother always are. Q. E. D. I should like to go abroad with you. You will be kind to me, will you not?"

"Did you ever know me to be unkind?"

"Why, no; but you never can tell. We shall get more familiar, perhaps, and shall forget small civilities. I believe that my father and mother are devoted to one another, yet they are always quarrelling."

"I don't think that you are right in saying that, Barri."

"Well," said the boy, misunderstanding him; "perhaps I am not. They never quarrel, but they often disagree. She is always ready to be down on him if he says or does anything wrong; and he would, at times, resent it if he had the pluck. He has not, you know. I have. He is always at his books, and she hates his books: she can't understand them. It is all very well," continued this young schoolboy, "talking about marriage, but I consider that it is a mistake, myself. My father and mother would have been much better apart."

"I should think so, or you would not have been born."

"That is the kind of thing," said Barri, "that they say to one another, and in my presence too. I don't wonder at it. They have neither of them got anything to do, and so they quarrel. If they would both turn Turk together and defy the Pope, they would get on most excellently. But then, you see, they will not. They spend their lives in disagreeing about small things; if they could

agree about one large one, there would be no happier couple in the world. I wish they would both turn Roman Catholics."

"And why?"

"Because I would not, and then they would have a point of agreement at my expense. I assure you, George Drummond, that I love them, but I do not think that they are very fond of me."

"Now, Barri, you must listen to me. You are coming away with me through Europe as my pupil, and you must obey me in every particular. You have got a little habit in your little head which must be got rid of. I say *must*, and I will be obeyed; you mind *that*. You are a sharp boy—a most objectionable thing to begin with; and you will turn out to be a sharp man—a horror not to be contemplated. You are beginning badly. You know a vast deal more than you ought to. What you have said about your father and mother is very smart, but you ought never to have said it. It was not gentlemanly."

Barri looked up in his face, and said, "Nobody likes me. I wish that some one would. I thought that you would. And I sha'n't die for so many years: it seems hard that nobody should like me. Put it to yourself, George. I have done no harm; I have only spoken the truth, and yet I am alone in the world. Even you have gone from me. I have no one now. Yes, I have aunt Arnaud. I will go to her; ay, and there is grandpa too. Let me go to them."

"Won't you stay with me, Barri?" said George Drummond; "you say that you are alone. Is your loneliness to be compared with mine? I will be your slave, if you like, but don't leave me now, for I want a companion."

The boy was puzzled. The mentor and tutor of five minutes before was, morally, at his feet. He could not understand the matter at all, but his instinct told him what to say and to do.

"George Drummond," he said, "be my friend, and make a man of me. I will follow you anywhere, and do anything which you tell me. But you must not bully me. I have had too much of that, and am in rebellion. Go anywhere, and I will follow you. You are the best friend I have ever made in my life. Take my hand, and let us go where you will."

CHAPTER XIX.

CONFIDENCE BETWEEN MRS. ARNAUD AND GEORGE DRUMMOND.

GEORGE DRUMMOND went about London that afternoon, making inquiries about steamboats, outfits, expenses, and so on. He arrived about nine before No. 17, without the wildest idea of any result in his head. He had been thinking continually about Barri, and had neglected to put his latch-key in its proper place, and so, when he arrived before the door, he had to knock.

The door was opened by Rachel, who promptly informed him that Mrs. Arnaud desired to see him at once.

Why? Who could tell? He was so thoroughly puzzled by the day's proceedings, that he did not much care. But he had an instinct that a new mine was going to be exploded under his feet. He went into the back-parlour, in which he understood that good lady was, and she saved him all trouble.

"Mr. Drummond," she said, "*do* you know anything about this?"

"My dear Mrs. Arnaud," he said, "you are the very woman I should have wished to speak to about this painful and, I think, absurd matter. You must hold me blameless."

"Undoubtedly. I never suspected you for an instant. The plot was executed before poor silly people, like you and myself, knew anything about it."

"Executed! Mrs. Arnaud. You are out of your mind. There is no fear as long as I am alive of such a thing happening."

"It is done, however," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"Now, make your mind easy, my dear madam. Assassinations are more often talked of than done. Read history, and see how seldom they succeed. Out of my own reading I could give you ten instances, and by going to the London Library I could give you twenty more. The boy is perfectly safe."

"I do not understand you, Mr. Drummond. Of what are you speaking?"

"Why, of the proposed murder of Barri, of course. I fancied that you knew all about it, but I suppose that I have let the cat out of the bag."

"The murder of Barri," said Mrs. Arnaud. "Have you been drinking, Mr. Drummond? No, I withdraw that inquiry; you never do. Who can possibly want to assassinate Barri?"

"Oh! no one," said George. "I was mad; but I am not so

now. Possibly you will tell me what is the matter ; I thought you had a clue to something else. Now, go on."

"You were very much attracted by Heloise, were you not?"

"Certainly."

"She has been married to D'Arcy these four months. That is all."

"Exactly. Well, I have known that since the morning, and I am not dead."

"Who told you?"

"Lord Festiniog."

"Who told him?"

"They told him themselves, by the advice, I believe, of Rachel, who was their confidant."

"Hem!" said Mrs. Arnaud. "Then she knew. Well, they are gone away now, and so long as you are satisfied, of course I have nothing to say. You seem very easily satisfied. I hate being deceived, myself. Now, we naturally come to this ridiculous nonsense about the murder of Barri. What is it?"

"I'll be burned alive if I can tell you. There is no object for it. I have let out so much that I may be as well hung for a sheep as a lamb. Lord Festiniog believes in it, and has asked me to take the boy abroad. I am going to do so."

Mrs. Arnaud bent her head down, and remained in thought for some time. Once or twice, George Drummond said something, but she grew impatient with him. At last she said,

"I have the key to this somewhere, but I must find it. Take the boy abroad, and at once, and leave everything to me. If I seem to do anything wrong, believe the best of me. I only desire to do right. I tell you, George Drummond, that I suspect that a certain woman, whom your father and I know, is at the bottom of all this. This comes with other things which I am utterly unable to understand. I only suspect an entire impossibility. Mind, I will never injure your father; only, I will do my duty by the family which has, on the whole, treated me so kindly and so well. Meanwhile, kiss me, George Drummond, for your own mother never could have loved you better than I do."

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. ARNAUD TELLS A LIE TO DRUMMOND.

GEORGE and Barri went away to do the tour of the Continent together, and No. 17 saw them no more. D'Arcy and Heloise were gone, and Mrs. Arnaud was left alone with Rachel.

She had never been so much alone before. Rachel, "excellent woman," was no company to her, for Mrs. Arnaud thought she had been deceived by her in the matter of D'Arcy's marriage; and, besides, she was not a woman who could talk to servants. In her old semi-religious life she had always had some one to talk to, and to confide in; now, she had no one except Lord Festiniog. She was even deprived of him now, for a change of ministry occurred, and he was, to his own astonishment, and that of the world, asked to take a rather high position. He came to her one night, and told her that he did not think they would last a month. "Fancy," he said, "putting me in office and passing over Rhyader. I don't know anything about it. I can speak a little; but I never attended to politics. I suppose you see that James Drummond is going into parliament; that is a new idea. Have you seen him?"

"Why, no," said Mrs. Arnaud; "his election has made him very busy. I shall see him in a day or two. Any news from Barri, and his son?"

"Yes, nothing but good; they seem to get on charmingly together, and they are going to the south of Italy."

"I will get their address, and write to George Drummond. He might go and see my poor child's grave at Ravenna."

"Well thought of, Mary, but I won't have the boy taken there. It is an unhealthy hole of a place."

"I hate the name of it," said Mrs. Arnaud, "but George Drummond would, I know, go there and lay a wreath on the little child's breast."

"Surely he would. By-the-bye, that woman who was with you there is now living with Drummond as his housekeeper."

"Is she? I do not care to see her. She recalls the most miserable time of my life. Yet, I liked her, too; she was very kind to me."

"If you go to see him you will have to see her; but I wish you would go."

"It shall be done." And so they separated.

Drummond had now taken a furnished house in Wilton Cres-

cent for a year, as befitted a member of parliament. He also had an establishment corresponding to the house ; and so when Mrs. Arnaud knocked at his door one Sunday afternoon, she was admitted by a butler, with a footman to match, and saw nothing of the dreaded housekeeper.

He thought that it was some other person, and came out of the dining-room into the hall, before they had time to show her into the drawing-room. He said "Good heavens !" and she went into the dining-room before him.

His lunch was not cleared away, and there was a decanter three quarters empty by his plate. She had a dim suspicion that he had been sitting there, alone, drinking. She did not see any signs of it in his manner, but still she thought so. She said at once, "You and I are old acquaintance enough to allow me a liberty, Drummond. As we are alone, let me have a glass of wine."

"Bring some sherry at once for Mrs. Arnaud," he said to the butler.

"Nay, I will take some of what you have there," she said.

"Bring the brown sherry directly, and don't stand staring there," was his answer to the butler, who went away.

"Sit down, Mrs. Arnaud, I cannot tell you the pleasure I have in seeing you.

"Drummond," she said, sitting down, "that is brandy that you are drinking, and there is not a drop of water on the table. I don't want any wine ; I only asked for it to enable me to let you know that I see what you drink."

"Why should I not drink brandy?" he said coolly, sitting opposite to her. "I have nothing left to live for in the world."

"Your son."

"Oh, that fellow. Yes, but he would be better off if I was dead, would he not?"

"There are a few friends who care enough about you, still, to be sorry to see you drink."

"Do you care about me, then?"

"I do, indeed, I assure you that I do. I think you used me ill once, but I have forgotten that. I think you behaved like a bad man to me in saying what you did, when you were married."

"I was not married at that time, Mary."

"My good friend, you know that you were."

"I will swear that I was not, though, and I will swear that I was never married in my life."

"That only makes matters worse then ; but I have not come here to discuss your private affairs, I come to consult you."

"As a friend?"

"Scarcely as an enemy, or I should not be here at all."

"Can I ever be more than a friend to you, Mary?"

She let him call her so; she did worse; she did what never could be excused; she said,

"It is not a time to talk about that. I do not say but that it might be possible in the future."

What were her motives in telling such a falsehood? She had as much idea of marrying the man as she had of marrying Lord Festiniog. Her motives were not high, we fear. She liked being admired by the man; she liked to see her power over him; and her curiosity was strong. She suspected that he knew something which she desired to know, or that, at all events he could find it out for her, and so oblige Lord Festiniog, whom she liked very much: there was simply no other motive for her leading the wretched man on. And yet, the usual tenor of that woman's life had been before, and was again, perfectly truthful and loyal.

"I will die for you, Mary, if you choose."

"I do not desire that, I want your advice and your assistance, that is all."

"They are freely given. May I kiss your hand?"

She thought, and said, "No."

"That will be for the future, I hope," he said, "Now, let me know what you wish."

"Well, then, Lord Festiniog seems to me a little mad."

"Well, he will make a good mess in office, but he is certainly sane."

"Well, you know best. He says that some one wants to kill Barri, and that is why he has sent him away with George."

"That is very odd," he said, looking straight at her. "Who, on earth, could possibly want to kill the boy?"

"I thought that you might find out," she said.

"Do *you* wish it found out?" said he.

"I do, very much. Can you find it out if you choose?"

"My dear Mary, all things can be found out if people choose to give information. If I find this out, shall I stand more highly with you?"

"Indeed you would; but I commit myself to nothing."

"Not at all. I will go to work."

"I thank you." And so she went.

CHAPTER XXI.

DRUMMOND AND CARLINA.

THE door had scarcely shut upon her, when the smiling lawyer, Drummond, began walking up and down the room, more like a lunatic than the extremely keen, cold-blooded man he was. The butler came in and asked if he should clear away. Drummond swore at him and ordered him away. The butler went downstairs and swore to the footman, not at him. The butler swore that there was not a better master in England than Mr. Drummond, and the footman agreed. For Drummond, with all his villainies, was a very kind man. He used to tell a most intimate acquaintance that he could not bear the sight of sin or sorrow. He committed a vast deal of the one, and saw much of the other.

What was he to do now?—that was the question before him. His aim in life had been to marry Mrs. Arnaud. He had risked his liberty for that; he had become a criminal for that; now the chance, as he thought, had come, and he dared not act. If he told her the truth, she would repudiate him; if he withheld the truth, what chance had he? She might, at any moment, say that he had continued to deceive her after her confidence with him; and he would be as far away from her as ever.

He sat back in his chair, and thought. He was a man eternally thinking and never acting. The time had come for him to act, and to act in the most decisive manner, and yet he could not.

A lie, nay more, a felony had been on his mind for nearly twenty years. That fact had made him drink at night, and go to sleep forgetting the matter. But if a man drinks at night he is capricious in the morning, and so Drummond always woke with a nightmare more ghastly than any which came to him in his dreams.

He wanted to marry Mrs. Arnaud. Why? That is beyond our power to tell. There was nothing very particular about Mrs. Arnaud. We know her well, but she has nothing about her to make a man desire to marry her. She is a fine showy woman with every possible good quality, save that of consistent truthfulness. But the man who desired, or desires, to marry Mrs. Arnaud, was, or is, a thoughtless man. Consequently, James Drummond was a thoughtless man.

She would have made him a good wife. Certainly, but for how long? She would have cured him of all evil habits, such as that of drinking, but again, for how long? It is impossible to say,

because she never married him. We will return to him as he sat after she had left him—begging pardon for the digression.

When he looked up, Mrs. Arnaud was not in the chair before him. Silently, another woman had come into the room, and was sitting before him.

"Is that you, Carlina?" he said.

"I suppose that I am one of the most unmistakable people in the world, and this is I," she replied.

Most unmistakable, assuredly. A handsome, very splendid woman. She had a shawl over her head, which made her face look more square and resolute than it would have looked had the vast mass of her coarse hair been freely falling about her shoulders, as was usually the case.

"Have you come here to plague me?" said Drummond.

"Yes," said the woman, Carlina. "I suppose you do not love me?"

"No."

"You love that woman still, I fear?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do about the matter? I will never hurt you, you know; but what will you do?"

"Carlina, shall I tell her the truth? Should I win her by—that way?"

"I cannot tell you. What on earth is in the woman? I have seen her, and I cannot see anything in her. Well, come Drummond, I will tell you what I am going to do with you. I am going to tell the truth."

"You would not do such a thing as that?"

"I don't know," said Carlina. "It might be worth my while to do so. I might make terms with Lord Festiniog."

"That would be sheer treachery," said Drummond.

"How have I been treated, Drummond? I ask you how?" said Carlina. "Man, there are things which you and I dare not talk of, even to one another. One thing, and one thing only, is in common between us, and that is the Ravenna business."

"No one knows anything more about that than we do," said Drummond.

"I beg your pardon," said Carlina. "The whole matter is known perfectly well at Ravenna. I can assure you of that fact. In Italy, people can know as much or as little as they like. A scandal like that cannot be hidden."

"But, woman, George is going to Ravenna. Old Festiniog has told me so to-day; I do not know if the boy is going. George goes."

"To dig himself up?" said Carlina.

James Drummond was not beyond a joke yet. He replied,

"No, to lay a wreath on his own grave. Mary has asked him to do so. Lord Festiniog, as I said, told me so to-day."

"The farce might get into a tragedy," said Carlina. "Come, take my advice, and make a clear breast of it. What can you possibly gain by keeping the secret?"

"Power over Mary."

"That is to be thought of," said Carlina. "I would not pay this price for any man in the world that you are paying for that woman."

"Women cannot love," said Drummond.

"Oh, indeed," said Carlina. "Well, I go to another point; you have no power over this woman, none on earth. Knowing what we know, Barri always stands between you and any power over her."

"Remove Barri."

"He is in Italy, certainly," said Carlina; "but, even there, murder is expensive and dangerous. The removal of Barri is nonsense. Why cannot you be quiet over the matter, at least for a time? I am puzzled myself. If you tell the truth she might hate you; and if you lied, and she found out the truth afterwards, she would hate you still more. One way or another, I don't think that she will ever marry you."

"No?"

"Certainly not."

CHAPTER XXII.

LORD FESTINIOG MAKES HIS REVELATION.

ALTHOUGH Lady Rhyader and Lord Festiniog had many polite quarrels, they liked one another as well as relations generally do. In France, as far as we have observed, relations and connections are very scrupulously polite to one another; in our dear little island, relations, particularly if they are religious, find it necessary to do their duty by being rude, and saying things which no one else would dare to say. That is all for the best, no doubt, although the people in Massachusetts and Vermont do not think so. To avoid being led into an essay on the matter, we merely come back to the simple fact that Lord Festiniog and Lady Rhyader quarrelled continually, but liked one another tolerably well.

They discussed matters very much. She was not a bad-tempered woman, but she thought it her duty to be always in mild opposition to the ruling power, whether that power was represented by her husband or her father-in-law. Her belief was that Rhyader was the wisest of human beings, but that he never must be allowed to find it out; consequently, they nagged at one another continually. The theory which she advanced to her father-in-law and the world was that he was a fool, who would be nothing without her. She had a profound belief in Lord Festiniog, though she would have died sooner than tell him so. She was an excellent little lady, but was totally unequal to a crisis.

One came, and she never put the matter before her husband; for although she would fight him at times on small matters, she yet was, at heart, afraid of him. She took it straight to Lord Festiniog. Possibly it was the best thing she could have done, for he was in possession of more facts than Lord Rhyader.

Lord Festiniog was at breakfast one morning, with his *Times*, enjoying himself thoroughly, when his valet threw open the door, and announced Lady Rhyader.

"My dear soul," said Lord Festiniog, sitting carefully on his chair, and not moving, "what the—— what, on earth, is the matter?"

"My boy," said Lady Rhyader, sinking into a chair.

"What! Barri?"

"Yes."

"What has he been doing?"

"Get up, and take this letter from me."

"I can't. Why do you come bursting into my dressing-room like a lunatic? Bring it to me."

Lady Rhyader rammed a letter down before him, retired to her chair, and burst into tears.

She thought that he would be impressed with the letter. He did not appear to be so at all. "This," he said, "is part of the nonsense which I have heard before."

"Do you believe in it?" said Lady Rhyader.

"Partially," said Lord Festiniog. "Have you told Rhyader about it?"

"No."

"That is a pity," said Lord Festiniog. "Would you mind going away?—because the fact is that I intend to walk through the whole of this business with a high hand, and I have not got my trousers on. The boy Barri shall be safe; no one shall touch him."

"But, Lord Festiniog, do you believe this? Is it possible that the woman's words can be true?"

"I can't tell you," said Lord Festiniog. "James Drummond has lied to me more than once, and may have lied now. The woman does not seem to have lied. And, all said and done, Alice, what, in the name of confusion, does it matter? What can possibly befall Barri?"

"He is going to Ravenna with George Drummond."

"Well, I wish he would go anywhere else," said Lord Festiniog, "it is a most unhealthy place."

"Truly; and if he finds out the truth, which this woman says is perfectly well known there, what a safe nurse he would be for the boy."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Alice; you would never suspect him?"

"What did you know of him before you entrusted my son to his care?"

"I don't know very much of him," said Lord Festiniog.

"Any one is good enough for Barri, I suppose," she replied, angrily; "his father is a dear saint according to this woman—is he not? His virtues may be hereditary."

"I cannot distrust him."

"Of course not," she said, scornfully.

"Now go away," he said, "let me dress, and I will see all about it. Meanwhile I will telegraph to stop them going near the place. I will do everything which can be done, but you must let me do it in my own way. Now, go and tell Rhyader; you ought to have told him first."

She went, and Lord Festiniog dressed hastily, and ordered his carriage. His valet noticed that he was extremely disturbed; he drove to the nearest telegraph-office, and was there for a short time; he had sent a message to Rome, requiring George Drummond not to approach Ravenna, for that it was most unhealthy in the autumn; he was, however, too late here, though he did not know it: then he got into his carriage again, and told the coachman to drive to Ravenna.

"To where, my lord?"

"To Ravenna—I mean, to No. 17."

"In which street, my lord?"

"Fool, are there two number seventeens in the world? There is but one, that in Hartley Street, and I wish that it had been burnt down before I saw it."

All this temper and haste had entirely disappeared before he got there. Like a perfect gentleman, as he was, he apologised to his coachman, when he got out, for calling him a fool. He knocked at the private door, and was admitted by Rachel.

"Is your mistress at home?" he said.

"Yes, but Mr. Drummond is with her in the back-parlour."

He at once went out and told his coachman to drive into the square and wait for him, and then, putting a sovereign into Rachel's hand, he bade her silently show him upstairs into Mrs. Arnaud's private apartments.

Rachel was one of those extremely honest and crusty people, so much admired for their frankness, who could have risked her soul for a couple of pounds; more dangerous humbugs do not exist; that sainted piece of virtue slipped Lord Festiniog past the parlour-door and up the staircase with the speed and dexterity of an experienced Spanish duenna.

When Mrs. Arnaud came up after her interview with Drummond, she started to find Lord Festiniog there, standing before the fire.

"How on earth did you get here?"

"I bribed your servant with a sovereign. Keep that woman, she is simply worth her weight in gold."

"I have a good mind to send her to the rightabout."

"Don't do that," said Lord Festiniog. "Never part with servants who will tell everything they know for money; they are invaluable. I cannot get them. That woman might be useful. Now sit down to the most important conversation you ever had in your life. To begin with—what has Drummond been saying to you?"

"That is a very long story to tell, and I am loth to begin it; still more loth to end it, because the end will lower me in your estimation. I will tell it to you if you like, for you have always been kind to me. The man has always loved me from the first, but I have never cared for him. I never absolutely disliked him, or we should not have been so intimate. He was very good to me abroad, and afterwards I thought him to be a villain, who was paying attention to me when he was married to another. Such, I now find, is not the case. Well, he has been renewing his suit to me."

"With what success? It seems strange that he should do so after so many refusals."

"Well, your family affairs are the cause of it. I felt positively certain that he knew, or could find out something about these extraordinary letters, threatening Barri's life. I wished to get at the truth, and I lied to do it. Now, you will never speak to me any more."

"Don't talk nonsense, Mary. How did you lie?"

"Not at all in words, but I gave him to think that if he could

find the matter out for me, I would look more favourably on him. I never meant to do so, but I wanted to get the secret from him."

"Have you done so?"

"No. I cannot get him to speak; he will not without a decided written promise from me."

"Which you have not given?"

"How could I, with the memory of Iltyd in my heart?"

"Oh! please never mind Iltyd; he was undoubtedly a saint; when did you ever hear me say to the contrary? He was my son; and I have always stuck by my family, and paid their debts. Gervase might be fifty times the ass he is, but I would stick by him all the same; Iltyd, however, is dead and buried; try to forget him just now, or at least, don't Balmoralise over him."

"I will not, then. Drummond has said that he will put me in a position I never dreamt of assuming if I would give him the promise of my hand."

"What more has he told you?"

"Nothing. I have had such a terrible scene with him, Lord Festiniog. He drinks, at times, but just now he is mad."

"He has not let out the truth to you, then?"

"I can't say, I do not know what the truth is. The matter lies in a nutshell: he wants to marry me; I will not marry him, and he holds some secret."

"I have found it out, Mary."

"Thank God, then, I have nothing more to do with it."

"I fear that you have, Mary," said Lord Festiniog. "Can you cast your mind back to the time when you were at Ravenna?"

"Yes. I do not see any difficulty in doing that. I have told you of those times before."

"Once again go through the facts."

"Well, I went to Ravenna with Carlina. I had my child with me. I fell ill there. I recovered, and the child died while I was delirious."

"Drummond was with you?"

"Drummond was with me at first; but it was Carlina who told me of my child's death. Then the doctor confirmed her."

"Now, Mary, listen to me, and keep your head. Your child never died at all."

"But I saw his poor little grave."

"But he did not die for all that."

"When did he die, then?" said Mrs. Arnaud, very quietly, but rather—well—dangerously.

"He is not dead at all," said Lord Festiniog. "That is Drummond's great secret, and I have discovered it."

Mrs. Arnaud burst out laughing.

"My lord," she said, "you are perfectly wrong. My poor boy is dead enough."

"I think that I can prove the contrary," said Lord Festiniog. "I feel sure of it. I have had an interview with Lady Rhyader this morning, who knows what, I think, is the truth, and who is in a state of mind about it;—she always is in a state of mind, you know—but, previous to her coming, I had an almost overwhelming amount of authority in my hands. I have deceived her, but I will not deceive you. Your child never died at all."

"Then if you allow that, and also allow my marriage, my son would succeed after Barri's removal."

"Certainly. James Drummond knows it, and has traded on the fact. You can see that now?"

"Perfectly, my lord."

"Do you remember George Drummond?"

"My lodger, why not?"

"Did you like him?"

"Yes, surely. He was very kind to me the first night I came here. He was in that miserable mistake about Heloise, and suffered for it. I took rather a fancy for him."

"Mary, that young man is your son."

There was a dead silence, scarce broken by the passing carriages in the street. She sat with her head bent over the fire, without saying a word. Lord Festiniog rose quietly and withdrew, putting a packet of letters in her hand. When he was gone, she read them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARY ARNAUD'S GREATEST TRIAL.

THEY were simply the letters of the woman Carlina, the ex-mistress of Drummond, who had, in a fit of combined jealousy and avarice, put the whole of the facts before Lord Festiniog, and part of them before Lady Rhyader. Nothing did that excellent woman ever write to Gervase. She knew that he would never believe a word of it, true as it was. She was a country-woman of Catherine de Medici, and knew perfectly well what she was doing.

The facts were most simple. We see, in this excellently

ordered country of ours, stranger things every day. Drummond wished Mrs. Arnaud to be left alone in the world, and to be dependent on him. He had her child removed. Italy is no better than our unimpeachable England, and no worse. He paid freely, and the child was taken from her.

Carlina was his agent, but she nearly went too far. He had offered her a large reward to do the thing for him. Knowing the certainty of her falling ill at Ravenna, at a certain time of the year, Carlina had persuaded her to go there. She succeeded perfectly.

But she was not a woman in the least degree likely to leave herself without witnesses. More people than she, in Ravenna, knew what had been done; in fact, the matter was so notorious, that she had to divide the money which she got from Drummond amongst those who were in the secret. She always, however, gave Drummond the idea that she was the sole repository of the secret.

It was only when the people, little better than banditti, whom she had employed, got too pressing for her pocket, that she came to London. Drummond had supplied her with money liberally, but she was getting middle-aged, and the continual calls on her worried her. She came to England with Drummond's money, and used it for the purpose of seeing if she could make a better bargain with Lord Festiniog. It seemed hopeless until she found that Drummond, with whom she renewed her acquaintance, was actually thinking of finding agents to remove Barri.

Drummond not only loved the mother, but he loved the son. The boy, George Drummond, had been adopted by him, and he, having no children, had taken to the boy. No boy in England had a more affectionate father than George Drummond had in his present father, James Drummond.

He had it in his power to make the boy a possible earl, and at the same time he had it in his power to lay an overwhelming load of obligations on Mrs. Arnaud. In the last interview with her he had hinted very strongly on the latter point, and asked her to give him a promise of marriage on his parting with a secret which would make her the proudest and happiest woman in England, or leave her a melancholy and wretched woman, of doubtful position, for the remainder of her days.

She had been playing with him, and she saw on what terribly dangerous ground she had been walking. Not one word had she got out of him about the threats to Barri. He only reiterated that he could discover everything about the matter, if she made him the promise. She ended her trial and his by saying coolly, but with extreme terror, with her hand on the door,

"James Drummond, I have made up my mind, at once and for ever. Sooner than marry you I would be found dead some cold morning in the casual ward of the worst workhouse in the city of London."

"You distinctly encouraged me the other day," he said, hoarsely, yet almost inaudibly.

"For that forgive me, James. I have made my ultimate resolution now. If you could make me a duchess, nothing would alter it. I am going, and, so, good-bye."

"Then I must serve you in spite of yourself. Will you shake hands with me before I go?"

Her heart melted to him suddenly. She came back, sobbing, and said, "God bless you, James Drummond, for your kindness in old times. May God save you from all evil."

"God!" he said, taking her hand, "why do not you do it yourself?"

She broke from him, and went upstairs, to find the whole mystery cleared up by Lord Festiniog. The man who had been her suitor for twenty-five years, to whom she had just been kind in a moment of pity, this man had inflicted on her the most ghastly injury which man could inflict on woman. He had kept his vile secret in his heart, to use against her, all these years; he had seen her bitter sorrow for her pretty child, and had never relented; he had professed love to her a hundred times; but now she saw what kind of love he meant, and cursed her beauty when she thought of it.

She had no pity on the man, of any sort or kind, but a most furious hatred; she felt as though she could have held the hand which had just clasped his in the fire. To torture her for all these years! to let her kneel on an empty grave, and offer up the purest prayers which ever flowed from human heart! She had prayed on the grave at Ravenna, that when she met Iltyd, purified and ennobled in heaven, her dead child might be with him in the form of a cherub, and that the three might pass into heaven together sanctified. All this, which had been the sentiment of her life, was made foolish, idle, almost absurd, by the selfish lust of a scoundrel.

Her throat was parched, and her hands were clenched, when she thought of what this man had done to her. More awful things came into her head. God had heard her fruitless prayers for her dead child, and had made no sign.

It would have been a bad thing for Mr. James Drummond had he come near No. 17 that night. He could never justify himself; his accomplice, Carlina, had noticed that a certain habit had

greatly increased upon him lately, and thought that his life was not to be depended on. After his death, she would be completely ruined. She, therefore, like a keen Italian woman, just threw herself into the hands of Lord Festiniog, stated her case completely, of course sparing herself as much as possible, and offered to go to Ravenna to prove it further, which she could easily do.

There was no doubt about the matter, as Mrs. Arnaud read through the letters which Lord Festiniog had left with her. He seemed satisfied that there was a strong *prima facie* case, and had the woman in hand. She at once knew it to be true. A hundred acts and hints of Drummond's, a hundred circumstances after her recovery came crowding on her, and made the matter certain for her which might still be doubtful for others.

Yes, that wretch had violated all that was most tender in her nature, and what had she got in return? Even that had not been given to her by him, but by the partner of his crime. What had she in place of her beautiful child?—"George Drummond."

"What," she said, in her first burst of anger, "was he to her?" Was there any resemblance in him to Iltyd? She had not seen him enough to judge, and yet she began to see resemblances in voice, features, and manners. She went to her desk and took out the portraits of her husband and her lost child, and sat before the fire to compare them to George Drummond.

It grew late and dark, but she sat still, brooding over the fire, with the two pictures before her. She tried to pray, once or twice, but she could not. God had allowed her to make fruitless prayers over her dead child, and had made no sign that he was living. The religion which had served her so well, through so many troubles, was suddenly swept away. Mrs. Arnaud went to bed that night, a lonely and desperate woman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GEORGE DRUMMOND'S TEMPTATION.

FROM London to Antwerp, from Antwerp to Brussels, from Brussels to Namur, from Namur to Luxemburg, went George

Drummond and Barri. Never were two such hearty companions in this world. Barri was, or seemed to be, in paradise. On only one subject was George at all disagreeable; he insisted on Barri speaking French every hour of the day before dinner. After dinner Barri might speak English, but before they had gone very far on their journey, Master Barri found French trip so lightly on his tongue that he preferred it, because he was proud of it; his French was by no means bad, and he had some right to be so. Finding at Strasbourg that German was necessary, he began studying that language, but made little progress in it.

Basle—the boy complained of Basle as being uncivilised; but then, by a divergence they made to Interlachen, he began to think more about Switzerland. Then they passed the mountains by the St. Bernard, and saw the monks and the dogs; then they passed on into Italy, until they came to Rome.

George Drummond at first had liked Barri as he might have liked half a hundred other boys, though, as a rule, he objected to the general run of boys, as mistakes. Barri, however, gained on him. The boy was shrewd, and would not only accept and understand a fact, but would generalise on it. Not always wisely, perhaps, but wisely enough to render an argument necessary, in which case his cousin, unknown as yet as his cousin, got the best, from superior knowledge and, possibly, superior intellect.

At last there came confidence between them. They were lying together in the ruins of the Coliseum, when Barri said,

“George, I wish you would confide in me.”

“About what?” said George Drummond.

“About Heloise, of course. I know all the trouble you had about her. Why do men like you care so much about women? I did not care much for her.”

“You cannot understand these things, child,” said George Drummond.

“No; but I could speak to you about them when you were sorry. May I? For you have been so very kind to me.”

“My poor little Barri,” said George Drummond, “you may talk as long as you please about Heloise. I have entirely got over that attachment. I loved her very much for a time, and I think that she made a fool of me. But she is far less to me than you are.”

“That is odd,” said Barri.

“Not at all,” said George Drummond. “I have always thought that I should like to form a mind. Ever since I read Plato, I have thought of what the perfect prince or president should be. You are pure and clever, why should you not form

yourself, young as you are, for the splendid position which you will ultimately occupy? Boy, if you did so, you might be prime minister of England. Do not speak any more to me about Heloise or any such people. I am carving my way in the world with desires and ambition before me, of which you cannot, as yet, dream. Your grandfather is no one; your father is a fool; you may do something yet. I would to God I was in your place."

"I thought that you were still in love," said Barri.

"That's all gone, my boy. I want a career. I have more than your ability: I want your prestige. You will be Lord Festiniog ultimately. It is doubtful whether I shall ever be in Parliament at all."

"But you will be rich, George."

"Rich. Yes, unless my father makes some fiasco. Suppose he was to die to-morrow and leave me unprovided for; suppose he was to leave his money—*Maxima debetis*—elsewhere, where should I be? I don't know what to do, Barri. I am utterly sick of the world."

"Then come to church," said Barri.

"I suppose that is the best thing," said George Drummond.

"We'll go together."

It was their first day at Rome, and Barri had seen nothing as yet. Holding tight by George Drummond, he passed through vast crowds, keeping on his feet as well as he could. It was an angry crowd, and they gesticulated at one another, but let them pass. The crowd grew thinner, and Barri found himself beside George Drummond in a vast building, with circular arches and domes which seemed to whirl above his head. There was a height before them of marble steps, down which streamed a crowd of singularly dressed people, some in brown, some in white, some in violet; near to the summit of the eminence which he saw, were groups of men in scarlet; before and below them went up a cloud of incense. Suddenly, an old gentleman in white came forward, and bowing, raised his hands. Barri was puzzled; it was the most awful and splendid thing which he had ever seen.

"Where are we, George?" he asked.

"In St. Peter's."

"Who is the old man?"

"The Pope."

So, from town to town, they went on idly. Lord Festiniog's telegram had missed them, and they were free to go where they would. They went to Naples, and it was there that George be-thought himself of his promise to go to Ravenna and do what Mrs. Arnaud had asked of him.

Ravenna is a most abominable hole ;—one of the most fever-stricken places in Italy—but he did not know that. He and Barri arrived there to find the Florence telegram sent on, forbidding him to go there. He telegraphed back to say that they had come there. Eight hours after, he received a telegram from Lord Festiniog, ordering him to send Barri back to Rome, but to stay there himself until he received letters. He telegraphed back to say that Barri was ill, and that he disliked to move him ; still, he made an effort to do so, but found that the boy was too unwell to travel.

Barri was, undoubtedly, very ill. He had Mediterranean fever. "A matter," said the most excellent doctor, "which time alone can remedy, Mr. Drummond. You are, I think, the now celebrated Mr. Drummond, of whom the lady, Carlina, forsooth, has written to me !"

"I am at a loss to understand what you mean, doctor."

"It will be, I suppose, in the Courts of Law ; so, why need we avoid speaking of it ? It is a simple thing, and often happens here, as, probably, in respectable England. Madame Arnaud came here with her child. Drummond also came here with Mrs. Arnaud. He desired that her child should be taken from her. He was legal adviser of Lord—the English names are droll."

"Festiniog ?"

"Exactly. Well, why more ? Carlina and her relations did the matter for Drummond, and was, no doubt, paid. Her family assisted her ; she has now telegraphed to her family to tell the whole truth about the matter. They will probably do so, if they are paid. I have known it for years ; but what business could it be of mine ? It remains, beyond doubt, that you are the cousin of this boy."

"I cannot believe it."

"Well, that is your affair. Half Ravenna will swear to it. The lawyer, Drummond, managed the business, and he will have to manage very dexterously to get out of the difficulty. The woman, Carlina, has paid her relations to keep this thing quiet ; now, she has sent a message to say that she has made another bargain, and that the truth is to be told. You have, as far as I understand, only this boy between you and a vast fortune."

"I will accept that as truth," said George Drummond. "Is the boy very ill ?"

"He might live, or, with care, might die."

"And no one the wiser, doctor ?"

"No."

"How well you speak English ?" said George Drummond.

"I have practised much in Rome," said the doctor.

"What should be done with him, if you wished him to live?" said George Drummond.

"He should be kept warm, he should have some one in bed with him. That is our practice."

"And if you wanted him to die?"

"Well, if he is kept cold, a boy of that age would die. If you want to keep him alive, give him beef-tea and stimulants every four hours. If you want him to die, leave him alone. That is all I have to say. But I warn you, Mr. Drummond, that it is a very dangerous thing to go very near him and take his breath. Our fever is most distinctly contagious."

"But, under the circumstances which you mention, the boy may live?"

"Undoubtedly. I will call to-morrow morning." And so, the doctor went away.

The object of the death of Barri was now fully understood by George Drummond. He was next in succession. Lord Festiniog was too old to marry. Lady Rhyader could never have any more children, and he would be an Earl with £50,000 a year. It was time for him to act in the matter.

He went to Barri's bedside. The boy was getting delirious, and his breath came hot, foul, and poisonous. He propped his head up and wiped his lips. The doctor had said that he was to have port wine and beef—where were they to be got? Not even at the British Consul's at that hour.

But there was brandy and some portable soup which they had bought on their travels. He made a mixture of these things, and got the boy to swallow them. Then he turned the silly old crone who was watching the boy out of the room, telling her that he was going to sleep with him. She went, saying that he was going to his death-bed. She had never learnt the magnificence of duty. In what school could she have possibly been taught it?

The boy turned, sometimes, in the night, with his fœtid breath hot on George's cheek: he asked always for drink, and George got up and gave it to him, though one act of neglect on his part might have given him all that he desired in this world.

Mrs. Arnaud who scarcely cared for him, Lord Festiniog who scarcely liked him, Lord Rhyader who did not care to think about him, would have held different opinions about him, had they seen his patient love for the boy who stood between him and all his earthly ambition, through the next three days. The only man who really loved him, the only man who would have understood him, the only man who ever knew him at his best, was the poor,

ruined, maddened attorney, Drummond, whom he had so long believed to be his father.

On the morning of the second day, he made inquiries, about Ravenna, as to the circumstances made known to him by the doctor. There was no doubt about them. The good folks of Ravenna laughed when they were spoken to on the subject. On the third day he got a letter from Lord Festiniog, saying that he was *primâ facie* satisfied, and commending Barri to his care.

So, the poor wearied head of Barri rolled about upon the pillow, and George Drummond watched it, as though it was the most precious thing to him in the world. One single act of neglect would have put him in a splendid position, and given him everything that the world could give.

But George Drummond was a better nurse to the boy than could have been got for money. Why? Simply because he loved the boy better than he did himself; and because, prig as he was, he loved his duty better than either.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DISASTER.

By degrees his charge recovered, and George gladly obeyed orders from home to return. The time selected was long past the equinox, and it seemed hard to go from the bright Italian sky into the darkness of London. They went again to Rome, and, by medical advice, stayed there a short time, and saw the Pope again, which was, at once, a mystery and a delight to Barri. George was a Protestant; and tried to teach the boy that the present Pope, though the most amiable of mankind, was, personally and authoritatively, the enemy of all that was good. It was no use at all—the traditions of his family were too strong; his ancestor De Barri, Giraldus Cambrensis, had admired the Popes of those times, why should not he admire the Pope of these times? George had no answer to his young charge, and they got on very admirably until they came wandering to Leghorn.

Here Barri was slightly ill again, and George got alarmed about him. He sent for the famous English doctor there, and consulted him.

The doctor said that Barri had a slight relapse, and ought to be kept perfectly quiet, with as little motion as possible.

"But," said George, "I am his tutor, and I am ordered to bring him home; the boy is heir to a large estate, and I dare not show my face in England if anything happened to him."

"I should not take him over the Alps," said the doctor. "Does he mind the sea?"

"Not at all."

"Then take him round by steamer, and let him get the fresh air; it would be the best thing in the world for the boy."

"There is no danger at this time of the year?" said George.

"Good heavens! my dear sir, we are not in the North Sea. We never have *our* ships lost, even in the Bay of Biscay. No, take your pupil round by sea, by all means. But I see that you are in difficulty; who is your patron?"

"Lord Festiniog."

"He is the head of the family still, eh?"

"Yes, and likely to remain so."

"Well, then," said the doctor, "I will write to him, and tell him that you, as tutor, did not recommend the course, but that it was done on my authority."

"I shall be much obliged to you," said George; and the doctor wrote:—

"My Lord,—I have ordered, on my professional responsibility, that Mr. Barri Arnaud, the hope of your house, should not cross the Alps at this late season. Mr. Drummond, his respectable and intelligent tutor, will, therefore, take him by sea from this place.

"The boy requires quinine and iron; also, I should let him have port wine in your climate, not, of course, in sufficient quantities to encourage a desire for stimulants, but in sufficient quantity. Exercise, change of scene, and athletics, but not objectless ones, are what the boy mostly wants. Expand his chest, or he will never make an orator—the thing, I suppose, which you desire.

"As for yourself, don't believe in colchicum for that gout of yours. Come here, and I will get you up in a fortnight. Climate, my dear lord—climate is everything, and there is no climate in the world like Leghorn. To me it was left to discover this city.

"Your Humble Servant,

"GEORGE PILGARLIC, M.D."

"Shall I send this by post, or will you enclose it to Lord Festiniog?" said the doctor.

"I will enclose it," said George Drummond.

"Good, then, here it is : I will introduce you to the captain of the *Newcastle*, and see that you have the best berths. What is this I see ? My dear sir, I never take fees from people in Lord Festiniog's position ; it does not pay in the long run ; I mean that I am already under too deep obligations to his lordship."

George Drummond wrote to Lord Festiniog, and told him of the decision. He enclosed another letter, strangely different from the doctor's.

"Sir,—As you now know the whole facts of your position, I can be perfectly frank with you. When this letter is gone to you, I shall show a copy of it to my lord ; not before Mr. Drummond has left London, and has gone south, with what purpose I am not prepared to say. I only say that two courses are open to you.

"If you bring the boy Barri over the Alps, there is great danger to him. I should not do that if I were in your place. I think it dangerous. I know it to be dangerous. I, most certainly, if I cared for his life, should do nothing of the kind.

"A sea-voyage after our marsh fever is always recommended. By avoiding the Alps and coming by sea from any port, you would save two people from the commission of a crime, yourself and Mr. Drummond.

"CARLINA GERSOTTI."

George Drummond thanked God that the difficulty was cleared out of his way by the independent testimony of two people. He would get his cousin home, and remove the horrible responsibility from his shoulders. The boy, whose death would ennoble him, was getting dearer and dearer to him.

And he saw such wondrous promise in the boy ; Barri had twice the intelligence which he had had at the same age, and only wanted education : that he could give, and make a great man of him, as he thought. "I shall see him from afar off at first, but the deuce is in it if I don't make a name in the world too : I in one place, he in another. We shall make a sound in both houses yet."

So they sped away across the Mediterranean. What were his thoughts about the man who had been such a kind father to him ? We cannot say. All we know of the man is from Barri, and to Barri he never mentioned Mr. Drummond or Mrs. Arnaud. The boy was in absolute ignorance, to the last, that George was his cousin. That had been agreed on between Lord Festiniog and himself ; the boy was only to know after they came home. And so they went on their voyage together, Barri looking about the ship, and George

watching him, as though the slightest accident would not put him in a position for which some men would have committed a crime.

The bay was passed, and they saw Ushant under a lurid sunset. The barometer had lowered so suddenly that the captain made up all his fires, and headed apparently for America. George laughed to him about his course.

"If we get behind the Start, Mr. Drummond," he said, "we are lucky. You are no sailor."

"Why, no," said George Drummond, "will there be any danger?"

"God knows," said the captain, "the ship is too long and too narrow. By Jove! see, there it comes."

The sun had scarcely sunk into the sea, when the western sky was as black as pitch. As sail after sail, which it was impossible to get in, was blown away, with a sound like a cannon followed by a rattle of musketry, George Drummond stood on deck, amused with his good fortune in seeing a real storm at sea. He went down once to where Barri was now sleeping quietly, and looked at him. He had no thought of danger, but the boy seemed cold, and he put another coat over him; then he went on deck.

It was piercing cold, and the engine-room looked bright and warm. There had been a heavy Atlantic sea all day, necessitating the using of the compensating gear, for her screw was frequently out of water. He was a great friend of the engineer, and he stepped down, cigar in mouth, to see how the gear worked. He sat in the little room and baked himself. The engineer was not at all alarmed; though, as the captain had put her head, she was pitching heavily.

It was beautiful to sit in the warmth, and watch the working of the compensation gear; as her bow dipped it spun rapidly, as her stern dropped it stopped slowly. They have better things of the kind now, but the original one was a splendid idea.

Her bow was out of the water higher than ever, and they were nearly unseated. The compensation gear was spinning as hard as ever. It had got out of order. The engineer rose hurriedly, with an oath, but it was too late, a ripping crack went through the ship, hurried feet were heard overhead, and the word went about that the screw-shaft was broken.

At once, of course, the ship was in the trough of the sea, a more fearfully dangerous engine of destruction than M. Victor Hugo's celebrated loose cannon. Every mast went overboard directly, at her first whip up into the wind. She was nothing better than a floating wreck, with the sea bursting on board of her every moment. In ten minutes, the warm engine-room was changed into a sea of

stinking steam, in ten minutes more, it was a seething sea of black coal mud.

George hurried to Barri at once. He had been thrown out of his bunk, and was dressing himself. He took him up to the cabin, and then he asked what was the matter.

"There is danger. Will you sit here while I go down again?"

"I will try to stand," said Barri.

George was scarcely away from him for five minutes; then he came up with his desk, and wrote a few hurried words, which he folded up and put in the breast-pocket of Barri's pea-jacket.

"We might part, Barri, you see," he said. "Give that note to Lord Festiniog. You must get ready, my boy. I hear the captain ordering out the boats."

Barri was perfectly still, but very much frightened. The captain came in, hurriedly, after a time, and said—"Mr. Drummond, I have lost my ship. I have the long-boat out, and some men in her. Will you and your charge jump into her at once, or she will be stove against the side?"

"Now, Barri, be firm," said George. "You must leap into the boat." And so they passed out of the cabin into the horrible hell of the tempest.

The ship was beginning to settle down. One boat had been got out, and she was still fast to the ship. George put Barri on the bulwarks, and told him to jump into her. The boy was terrified.

A brave man might have been. The boat was surging, leaping, diving nearly head under, in the lee of the ship, at one time near the side, at another an oar's length away. The men in her were shouting to those who were on the bulwarks to leap. Few dared. Was the boy to blame?

"Leap yourself, Mr. Drummond," said the captain; "the men will cut the painter directly; your life is more valuable than the boy's."

George Drummond had other ideas, though. He took Barri in his arms, and at the next and last surge of the boat towards the ship he dropped the boy among the sailors at his feet, before she swerved away from the ship again. The man at the bow cut the painter, and the boat parted from the ship. A great roller parted them, and they saw one another no more.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BARRI'S RETURN.

LORD RHYADER received one morning the following singular telegram :—

"Brown Jones, Falmouth. Lord Rhyader, Bolton Street, Piccadilly. Come here at once. Boat *Nemesis* has been picked up by *Arethusa*, and men landed here in Sailors' Home. Boy says that he is your son. Men confirm it. Boy rather exhausted. Come directly."

Lord Rhyader had for some time disliked to do anything without his father's advice or knowledge. The fact was that Lady Rhyader was getting a little peevish, and they did not get on so well together as they did formerly. She always, when consulted about anything, at once opposed it, without a moment's thought, and then defended her opinion through thick and thin; while, on the other hand, old Lord Festiniog always thought before he spoke, and then gave the best advice he could. Consequently he gained, without meaning it, a power over Rhyader which his wife had lost. She knew it, and was jealous of it. Lord and Lady Rhyader were, of course, on the best of terms; but it was impossible to deny that there was not more confidence between father and son than between wife and husband. He, on this occasion, however, never thought for one instant of his father. With an energy of tenderness which he had not shown for a few years, he ran into her dressing-room, and, with his arm round her neck, read the message to her.

"Alice," he said, "you must help me now."

"Gervase," she replied, "I am as well able to help you as Lord Festiniog: or, indeed, as Mary Arnaud. We must act together here, my love, and never act apart any more."

Lord Rhyader was man enough to say no more: if she had been in the wrong, so had he. They had both been a little too much absorbed in their separate selves, and the potential disaster united them at once. The truth must be told, they had never cared very greatly for the boy: he did not suit them, and they were more comfortable without him than with him. Now, however, he was likely to be lost by some hitherto unexplained disaster, they were in confidence instantly: in a confidence which lasted to their deaths—as far as it went.

They both knew that their mutual confidence had returned. They made no effort at an explanation, the chances would have been as ten to one that they would have quarrelled had they done

so. The new, unspoken reconciliation between them was so pleasant that neither of them desired words.

"We must start at once, Gervase," she said, with a view of bringing in other matters.

"At once," he said, ringing the bell, which was answered before either of them spoke. He and she gave directions for an immediate and sudden journey, and they were alone again. She chivalrously broke the ice for him.

"This is a piece of your father's work, Gervase."

"So it seems," said Lord Rhyader.

"Our boy Barri is sent abroad with George Drummond, who it seems is heir to the house. Do you believe it?"

"Yes, darling. I think that there is little doubt about it. Don't attempt to dispute that. Drummond has confessed it, you know."

"Well, I will not dispute it. But that young man is suddenly taken into favour, and sent abroad with our boy. Who did that? answer me."

"My father."

"Exactly. And what do you think of your father now?" This was said with scorn.

Lord Rhyader thought about his father as he had always done, as a good gentleman and a kind friend. But he saw from Lady Rhyader's eyes that she considered that she had scored a point against him, and was too polite to contradict her. He said nothing, but looked as if there was really nothing to be said in palliation of his father.

"Mark my words, Gervase," she said, solemnly, rising up to prepare for her journey, "this is a plot, hatched out at No. 17, and Mary Arnaud is in it. Your father, although dictatorial, is weak, and he has been led into it by that woman."

"But, my dearest Alice, I don't think——"

"Good. When I am dead, and you know the truth, you will remember my words. I will go and get ready for my journey."

"But, Alice, my father would not lend himself to anything underhand. You must think of that."

She thought of it, at once, in her usual way, for one second, and then enlarged upon it, without exactly knowing what she was going to say next. "You will find it, Gervase, exactly as I have put it to you: and if your father was here before me, I would tell him the same thing. Will you be convinced by one question? Where is George Arnaud?"

Lord Rhyader seemed to think that there was a great deal in that, though he could not tell why, knowing nothing about the

matter. He said, rather meekly, "I suppose we had better send this telegram on to my father?"

"I suppose that you had better," she said: "that would be only decent; but let us get to Falmouth first. I don't want his interference."

They were a difficult couple to move. The telegram had been sent to Lord Festiniog more than two hours before they were at Paddington. They were not deeply anxious, for there was nothing to make them so in the telegram. They took the journey quite comfortably in the train at noon, wrapping themselves up warm, eating and drinking, in a trifling manner, and getting up their mutual case against Lord Festiniog. Lady Rhyader acted as attorney, and Rhyader himself accepted the brief provisionally, knowing perfectly well that he would no more dare to say one half of the things to his father which his wife put into his mouth than he dared fly. However, he knew that his father had some sixty or eighty thousand pounds which he could leave to his groom, and so he held a large trump card over his wife, in case she should go too far, and provoke an entire rupture. He let her ease her long-suppressed mind on Lord Festiniog, therefore, with the greatest complacency: and they got on most charmingly: particularly as he intended to make her spokeswoman in the business, whatever it was. And that he could not quite make out; there was to be a war of liberation from his father's authority, and his father in his chivalry would never quarrel with him for taking his wife's part. If there was to be any real fighting, she could do it better than he could; and he could always check her by reminding her of the loose cash.

So they amiably got to Shrivenham, and got out there to walk about while the train was being shunted. It was an unusual thing and Lord Rhyader asked the station-master the reason of it.

"A special train a-coming through, sir. Stand back there! stand back!"

A distant humming sound, then a long-drawn shriek; then an approaching roar which swelled upon the ear. Then a vision of a fiery dragon filled with smoke, fire, and steam, coming towards them swifter than the wind, with pulses going quicker than a madman's heart; smoke-grimed, steadfast men upon the monster's back, guiding it as it shook the station with a shock like an earthquake. One saloon carriage in the rear of the engine, which seemed to leap at the point. That was all, the whole terrible and dangerous arrangement was out of sight before the echoes which it had raised could die away.

Lord and Lady Rhyader continued their journey methodically. The greatest event in their journey to Falmouth was that Lady Rhyader's maid lost a shawl. The loss was discovered at Exeter; the lady's maid having, as a preliminary to confession, given a month's warning in the waiting-room, told Lady Rhyader of the awful fact. Lady Rhyader was in tears at once. It was not a very valuable shawl, and she could not bear to part with her maid. She did not care about the matter, and Rhyader, with that shrewdness which his father ranked so high, discovered that the maid had got the shawl on herself; and the valet proved that in the confusion at Shrivensham he had, in an absent moment, put it over the young woman's shoulders. Lady Rhyader made her a present of the shawl, and so sold her liberty to her maid. The month's notice was withdrawn, and they, to use a Devonshire expression, drumbled on to Falmouth.

What was their astonishment when they were met by Lord Festiniog at the door of the hotel! He was among a group of sailors, talking eagerly to them, but he seemed to know of the Rhyaders' coming perfectly well, and to take little thought about it.

"I have got the boy here, upstairs," he said: "but I doubt if we shall ever make anything of him again. It is the most unhappy business which ever was seen. The poor boy is idiotic. I can't get anything out of him. He has had a shock to the system from which he will never recover, unless we take very great care of him."

Lady Rhyader, now, was seriously alarmed. Her rebellion against Lord Festiniog might stand over, at all events for a time. She went swiftly upstairs to Barri, and from the moment she saw him never thought about herself as long as she lived. After she had once seen the boy she thought no more of Lord Festiniog. The terror of the sight before her put every frivolous and ill-tempered idea from her mind for ever. Who was to blame for the catastrophe? She cared nothing at all. It was her own child who was before her, the child for whom she had cared too little, as she saw now, but, in what fearful case!

Worn almost to a skeleton, he was sitting up in bed, rocking his body to and fro, as if to allow for the motion of a boat. His right hand, thin with illness, clutched the mattress convulsively, while his left was held up as if to shield him from an enemy expected every moment. The nurse explained it to her. The boy had been three days in the open boat in the heavy sea, and had sat like that with his right hand clasping the gunwale, trying to

shield himself from the drenching waves which sometimes broke over them from the South-West. "The men put him to leeward, ma'am," said the nurse; "that is why he holds his left arm up to shield himself, and holds on to the gunwale with the other."

"Why will he not lie down?" said Lady Rhyader, utterly terrified.

"He will never lie down any more, ma'am," said the nurse.

"He will have the rattles in the throat in ten minutes."

"Get out, you old fool, do," said a voice behind them. "How dare you, you crone, frighten her ladyship like this, when you know that the best man in Europe has given his opinion to-day?"

Lady Rhyader turned: it was Lord Festiniog who spoke.

"My dear Alice," he said, "do not listen to the croaking of this old witch. When you sent me the telegram this morning, I did two things—ordered a special train, and got Sir Alexander McFittie to come with me. He says that the boy will not die, but that he has a nervous shock which will spoil his career, at least for a very long time. You must brace up your nerves, my dear, you must nurse the boy, and so make him fonder of you than he was before. That is easily done, for he is an affectionate little fellow, and you might make him, at least, as fond of you as he is of me."

He was going to say—as he was of Mary Arnaud—but he thought twice before he said that.

"Lady Rhyader," he said, suddenly and sternly.

"Yes, Lord Festiniog."

"Have you done your duty by this boy?"

"No," she said. "You always made the boy jealous of us. How could we possibly do our duty by him?"

Lord Festiniog had never looked on it in that light before. He said,

"I should not have looked on the matter in that light myself."

"Without doubt," said Lady Rhyader, determined to win every point she could possibly score, but wondering what would be the next one.

"Well, let bygones be bygones, let us take care of the boy. You stay with him, I must go and break the news to Mary Arnaud." And so he went out to Lord Rhyader, leaving mother and son together.

"What, on earth, has Mary Arnaud got to do with it?" thought Lady Rhyader. But there was the boy, delirious in his bed, calling out for that woman and not for his own mother.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES.

He found Lord Rhyader alone, walking up and down the room, and a very important conversation ensued between them.

"I have made light of your boy's case to Alice, Gervase," he said, "but there is no doubt whatever that he is extremely ill, and it is very doubtful if he will live to be a man. You must really rouse yourself to look facts in the face. The boy has undergone horrors and privations which have half killed those strong sailors who have brought him home. Do you know that a mutinous part of the boat's crew wanted to——"

"Well?"

"Well—wanted to kill the boy for a horrible purpose. It was only by the resolution of two or three that he was saved. And he knew it, for he heard them talking about it, and he will, it is feared, never get it out of his head any more; such shocks are not felt at his time of life without permanent results."

"I am deeply grieved, father, but I do not share your fears to this extent which you speak of. I cannot understand your anxiety."

"It is real, however," said Lord Festiniog. "I loved the boy, I think, better than you did."

"I will not argue that point, father," said Gervase. "If you loved him so much, why did you insist on his going abroad with his only rival?"

"I sent him abroad to keep him out of mischief. I sent him abroad with George Arnaud because I trusted the young man. He has gloriously fulfilled his trust."

"By bringing back my boy an idiot," said Lord Rhyader.

"Bringing?"

"Yes. I suppose he has taken care of himself?"

"George! Have you not heard? George went down with the ship, and saved the boy at the sacrifice of his own life!"

"Good heavens!"

Lord Ryader was silent for some time. He was a just man, and his regret at having been so unjust to George was great. "You are sure of this?" he said.

"Hear for yourself; ask one of the sailors in. Send in George Horrocks," he said to a waiter who was in the room.

A sailor came in. "My son, Lord Rhyader," said Lord Festiniog, "wishes to ask you a question or two. Your general

evidence will be given before the Board, of course, but answer him what he asks you."

"I wanted to know if Mr. Drummond could have saved his own life, if he had deserted the boy whom he dropped into the boat?"

"Most certainly, sir," said the sailor; "half-a-dozen times over. The boy was frightened and would not jump, and so, he gave up his own life for the boy's, fair and square. No doubt about *that*."

"And you saw him drowned after, with no attempt to save him?"

"We had done all that it was possible for men to do. We kept near her until she went down, in hopes that some one might rise, but I need hardly say that no one did. We incurred great danger by not keeping the boat's head straight before the wind, at once, as you would know, my lord, if you were a sailor."

"I beg your pardon," said Lord Rhyader. "I have no doubt that everything was done. I wish you a good afternoon," and the man went.

"There is the end," said Lord Festiniog; "the end of a good family, too."

"If Barri dies."

"Well, his life is very problematical. In case of his death, the entailed property all goes to you, and, I suppose, afterwards to some religious establishment. I am more sorry than ever about George."

"You seem to think more of him than you do of Barri, now."

"There you do me an injustice, as usual, Rhyader. I have a stronger personal feeling for the boy than ever I had for poor George Arnaud. I loved the boy better than ever you did. My feeling for him is one thing, my feeling for the extinction of our family is another."

"The remedy lies entirely in your own hands, father," said Rhyader. "Alice will live to any age, and have no more children. The remedy lies with yourself."

"I do not see how."

"Marry, yourself."

Lord Festiniog kept steady on his feet, but, morally, he reeled as this proposition was made to him. He had not thought of such a thing for thirty years. Was Rhyader mad?

Apparently not. He was most perfectly cool over the matter, and appeared in earnest. He repeated,

"Marry, yourself."

"But you would not approve *that*," said Lord Festiniog.

"I should, most entirely," said Lord Rhyader. "Why should I not? It can make no difference to me, and would prevent my feeling any responsibility as to the disposal of the property."

"But I am so old," said Lord Festiniog, still doubting if he heard aright.

"Not a bit. You are only sixty-two."

"But whom am I to marry? You are mad. Have you any one in your eye? Have you ever thought of this before?"

"Never. It only came into my head when I heard your description of poor Barri. As for the lady, why, you must choose for yourself; I really am too much out of the world to advise you."

"Just conceive how very much at random you are talking, my dear Rhyader. What would Alice say to you, if she knew that you had made this proposition?"

"Oh! you must not think of speaking about it to her yet. It may come to nothing. Think about it for yourself."

Lord Festiniog had plenty of time to think about it, for he by no means went back by express. The slowest train on the line would do for him *now*, for at the other end he had to tell poor Mary Arnaud that her newly-found and scarcely-known son was dead.

"Poor thing!" he said to himself. "This world is very hard on her. There seems to be no end to her troubles. I wish she could have made up her mind to marry Drummond, and that he had not been such a rascal. She might have been happy with him."

He had forgotten the awful proposal which Lord Rhyader had made of his own marriage. This thought of Mrs. Arnaud's marriage brought it back to him with a shock.

Going by a slow train, Lord Festiniog naturally met with an accident. His own special train, in which he had come down, had to be sent back to Paddington somehow. It was sent back in the rear of the ordinary slow train, and, by way of distinguishing *itself*, dashed into the ordinary train by a combination of circumstances which were afterwards proved to be entirely impossible. It was clearly proved before the Board of Trade that the thing never could have happened, and yet it did, for all that, and Lord Festiniog broke one of the small bones in his hand, and, in trying to give assistance, had his whiskers scorched by the fire of one of the engines. When asked which, he declined to answer the question, as he might commit the company, in which he was a large shareholder.

He, however, got to London somehow, and was driven to his house in due time. To his great surprise he found that Mr. Drummond had called three times on that morning. He had not thought that Drummond would have sought him so very eagerly, and he was puzzled.

Meanwhile it was necessary, in common kindness, for him to go and see Mary Arnaud, and break the news to her as gently as possible. He had not been near No. 17 for some time, and felt considerably guilty on that score. Mary, of whom he was secretly afraid, would be angry with him in the first instance. She had always had a good case against the family, and now had a stronger one. He would have to tell her that her so recently acknowledged son was drowned. It was not a very agreeable matter under any circumstances ; still less so under the present.

People enjoy themselves in three ways : by anticipation of a pleasure, by the realisation of that pleasure, and by the recollection of it afterwards. In the same way people plague themselves in three ways : by the anticipation of the trouble, by the realisation of the trouble (which is generally not half what they thought it to be), and thirdly, by the solution of the trouble, and the humiliating doubt as to whether there was any trouble to be afraid of after all.

Lord Festiniog was deeply plagued about Mary. He knew, or thought that he knew, that he should have a scene with her. And he was not well ; the railway accident had shaken him, his finger was in pain, and that irritated him. He had anticipated more than half his troubles, however, before he drove up to her door, at nine o'clock in the evening.

The house was completely dark, as he knocked at the private door. It was opened with startling rapidity, and he found himself pulled into the passage, and the door shut behind him. There being no light, he was unaware what was going to happen to him ; he was not long in doubt. He was kissed in the dark all over his face.

"Darling," said the kisser, "it is so good of you to come from the club so soon ; and you have not been smoking. Good child ; come up now, and smoke in our bedroom."

The lady, who had her arm round his neck, was proceeding to stroke his hair. Lord Festiniog had gone so far in an explanatory speech as "Madam, I think you are in error," when the hall was suddenly illuminated by two candles. Lord Festiniog saw that one of them was carried by Mrs. Arnaud, and the other by the terrible old madame of Paris. Regarding himself as a lost man, he looked down to see who was accidentally kissing him. He dis-

covered at once that it was ex-Mademoiselle Heloise, now Mrs. D'Arcy.

She, with a shriek which was nearly a yell, fled for protection to her grandmother, and threw herself on her bosom. They both came down together; Madame Merton, being underneath, made some vigorous attempts to break her grand-daughter's head with the candlestick. Mrs. D'Arcy, now alive to the situation, and having had to do the thing once or twice before, defended herself in such a scientific manner, that Madame Merton cast the candlestick at Lord Festiniog, and begged for life, saying that she was an old woman, and would not trouble them long.

Lord Festiniog and Mary Arnaud got the old lady on her feet, and took her into the little parlour. Mrs. D'Arcy, the gentle and excellent Heloise, came in to them, and then it appeared that that most excellent of young ladies had lost her temper.

She was as beautiful as ever; nay, she was looking better than ever she had done; but old Lord Festiniog's eyes were opened, as regarded her, for the first time. The thin crust of *bourgeois* French respectability had been worn through, and the real nature appeared below.

Let us not be misunderstood in any way. Three-quarters of France and three-quarters of Ireland produce a population which the whole world, for certain qualities, cannot match. But there is a residuum in both countries unmanageable, and save on one solitary subject, unsympathetic. We name no provinces in either kingdom, and yet we know that we have to deal with certain people, possessing certain virtues, as we would with wild beasts.

Heloise came from a part of France pre-eminent for its virtues, but also pre-eminent for its temper. She had lost her temper, firstly, because she had kissed Lord Festiniog in the dark, and, secondly, because her grandmother, who came from the same part of the country, had beaten her over the head with the candlestick. What is mainly to the purpose, however, is the fact that the scene which followed between her and her grandmother put the idea of matrimony in a rather difficult light to Lord Festiniog's eyes.

The debate was carried on in the French language, which was possibly a relief to the servants, but none to Mrs. Arnaud or Lord Festiniog, who were both mistress and master of that fluent and elegant language, so well adapted for all phases of soul. Mrs. D'Arcy and Madame Merton, being both extremely angry, used the resources at their command with all the genius of their nation. At one period of her life, Madame Merton had not been so successful in her affairs as she was now, and every detail of those times was hurled in her teeth with the most singular epithets. In this

"hurling in the teeth," the fact that those teeth were false, and that they never had been paid for until the outraged laws of France forced the old lady to do so, was by no means forgotten. Madame Merton's establishment also was, as we have previously said, a place of meeting for innocent lovers. This circumstance was now turned against the old lady with singular *esprit*. Some of the marriages, practically made up in the *magasin*, had by no means turned out so well as those which are proverbially made in heaven; and the details of many of them were alluded to by Mrs. D'Arcy, not only with singular freedom, but with powers of oratory which excited the surprise, almost the admiration, of Lord Festiniog. In fact, that most admirable and gentle housewife, Mrs. D'Arcy, ended, as his lordship afterwards rudely expressed himself to Lord Rhyader, by leaving Madame Merton without a single rag of character to cover her back. One transaction, involving 25,000 francs, a penniless duke in the employment of the later empire, and a young heiress, was so repeatedly alluded to, that Lord Festiniog lost the thread of the story in consequence of Mrs. D'Arcy's volubility, and he could not quite make out whether it was the wife who had exchanged into a regiment of turco for service in Algeria, or whether it was the husband who had burned men. It was made perfectly certain, however, by this young lady that they both cursed the day on which they saw Madame Merton.

Madame, however, seated now peacefully in Mrs. Arnaud's easy chair, with a glass of curaçoa, let her grand-daughter scold herself into quiescence without doing anything but agreeing with a sardonic laugh to everything which the young lady said; occasionally correcting her when she appeared to soften circumstances, and saying "*bon ! bon !*" when she made a more desperately ruinous assault on her reputation. Scolding cannot last for ever, as both ladies knew perfectly well; and Madame Merton, with the military genius of her nation, allowed her enemy to exhaust her resources before she attacked her in full force. Nay, she showed more than the military genius of the nation, great as it is. She combined it with that of such great generals as Fabius Cunctator, Frederick the Great, the Duke of Wellington in the last Spanish campaign, and General Grant in his advance upon Richmond. She chose her own time of fighting, the neglect of which rule has ruined both the Napoleons.

When Mrs. D'Arcy was quite exhausted, it became her turn to receive punishment, and by this time her husband was in the room, wondering what could possibly be the matter. The old lady had calculated on this with the subtlety of a Cleopatra or a Catherine de' Medici. In the most inexorable manner she overhauled the

character of Heloise before her bridegroom in a way which made Lord Festiniog desire to kill her. Heloise had been, in her way, a very considerable flirt, and had drawn a great deal of money into the perfectly virtuous establishment of her grandmother without receiving any recognisable per-centage on the same. Still, she was a good girl, as her grandmother perfectly knew. Every man she had spoken to as a friend was now made out to be a lover, and the old lady absolutely revelled in the disclosures which she thought she was making before a jealous husband. The end was that Mrs. D'Arcy was reduced to somewhat spiteful tears.

It was becoming very distressing until D'Arcy came forward to his wife, and, kissing her kindly, burst into a laugh. "She says, in effect, that the men all ran after you," he said. "Of course they did; I did; and, what is more, I have got you. Ah, Madame, you can't prevent that!"

"You have got a fickle heart and a bad temper, Mr. D'Arcy," said the old lady. But D'Arcy only laughed at her, and went away pleasantly with Heloise.

"Good evening, Madame," said Lord Festiniog. "Mary, you must come upstairs with me at once; I have something to say to you which can wait no longer, though I wish that some other cause of delay would intervene before I tell it to you."

"Come, then," she said, leading the way. "Here are the bride and bridegroom toiling upstairs before us. Say a good word to them, as few, except you, can say it."

"But it would be a liberty."

"Not in the case of an old man like you," she said. "You can say anything."

"Anything," he thought, "but what I have come to say. This horrible procrastination!"

He ran upstairs and touched D'Arcy's arm. "Captain D'Arcy," he said, "I hope you will allow a very old man, like myself, to tell you, before your wife, that you have behaved like a most loyal gentleman in not paying attention to Madame Merton's objurgations."

D'Arcy looked at him in calm wonder.

"Did you think such a thing possible, then, Lord Festiniog?"

"I could not say. I hope that I have not taken a liberty. But you behaved so well, that, as an old man, I thought I might speak."

"I am only too proud of your approval; but, indeed, I saw this little woman of mine in Paris under such difficult circumstances and temptations, that nothing would shake my faith in her now; not even Madame Merton's tongue."

Lord Festiniog admired the young man's chivalry, and bade him good-night. From certain things which Madame had let drop—"let drop," we say—poured out in buckets—he rather thought that his imperfect acquaintance with the French tongue, when spoken with extreme volubility and with a pure Parisian accent, had something to do with his complacency. However, here was Mary following upstairs; here was her room, and here was—sitting in her chair, another Heloise, much older than Mrs. D'Arcy, and, in his opinion, considerably more beautiful.

"Oh, you are here, Clotilde, my dear soul. Grandma and Heloise have been quarrelling downstairs. Lord Festiniog, this is my cousin, Mademoiselle Clotilde Aubigné. Try to make friends with her, for she has been a loving friend to me."

"Say no more, Mary, say no more," said Lord Festiniog. "We want a mutual friend to-night. I hope that Mademoiselle Clotilde will let me number her among mine."

As she advanced towards him, offering her hand; as he looked at her matured, Madonna-like beauty—so like that of Heloise in feature and colouring, and so unlike it in its splendid repose—Lord Festiniog found a little monitor in his left breast, asking him if he was quite so old as he had represented himself to the D'Arcys on the stairs. Was that admiration for him in her eyes? "No, I am not vain enough for that at my time of life," he said. "It is only the reflection of my own admiration in hers."

"Can this lady, in whom you have, as you say, the most entire confidence, stay with us while I tell you some very distressing news?"

"Yes, I would rather she did. God has sent her to me as a comfort, and why should she leave me? Clotilde, you will stay, will you not? Now, my dear papa, what makes you so grave?"

"Mary, you are a widow."

"Yes," she said, with a sudden movement of her hands.

"You are now a childless one."

She looked at him steadily, and said, "I do not understand you."

"Your son George is drowned."

"When I was trying to love him—when I was hoping, hoping for his return—when I was thinking of every good quality which his father possessed, and endeavouring to see them reflected in him? This is rather hard, is it not? It is cruel."

"The sea is very cruel, Mary."

"Ay! but God is more cruel than the sea itself. I was not prepared for this. Let me be quiet awhile. I would rather that no one spoke to me for a short time, if they did not mind."

She bent her head over the fire, and Clotilde beckoned to Lord Festiniog to come and sit beside her. He went to her, and she took his hand in hers, while she whispered in French:—"Good and admirable friend, what has happened?"

"Her son is drowned," said Lord Festiniog. "Drowned in the most noble manner, but at the bottom of the deep sea for all that. She will wish to know the particulars immediately. Stay with us, dear lady, while I tell them to her."

He took her hand, and kissed it.

"I will stay with you by all means, my lord," she said, "but she will want an answer soon. She was getting to love the son so little known to her. Yes, my lord, she will be wanting an explanation soon, and I will stay with you. She has never said anything but good about you."

Mrs. Arnaud rose and confronted them at this point. She was not in the least degree angry or *emportée* but she was terrible in her beauty for all that. Lord Festiniog was glad that he had such a protection in the gentle, though unknown, Clotilde, against the equally gentle, though better known, Mary.

"Lord Festiniog," she said, "I wish to say a few words. Did I ever seek an alliance with your house?"

"Certainly not, Mary."

"Did I ever seek to intrude myself on you, until after I had discovered that I was legally married?"

"Certainly not, Mary. But you must remember——"

"I know. You and Rhyader were kind, believing me not to be legally married. When you could dispute the fact no longer, what did you do?"

"Acknowledged the fact, Mary; you cannot deny *that*."

"Yes, after you were forced to do so. Drummond did that for me. I owe more to Drummond than I do to you, after all."

"Mary! Mary!"

"I say it again, I owe more to him than I do to you."

"But he stole your child."

"Yes, and you have made away with him. At least, you come and tell me that he is drowned. He went to sea by your orders. Is Barri drowned?"

"No, but he is an idiot."

"He never was anything else," said Mrs. Arnaud. "I do not see why my son should be sacrificed, and Lady Rhyader's left in a mere state of idiocy. It is not just."

"But you will not argue matters, Mary. You have lost your old sense. I cannot understand you. If I had been asked who was the most sensible woman in London, I should have named you. I am utterly surprised."

"I will go to bed," said Mrs. Arnaud, wearily. "I cannot stand this any longer. I will go back to a religious life. I am not fit for the world."

And so she left Lord Festiniog without any further recognition.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LORD FESTINIOG AND CLOTILDE.

LORD FESTINIOG and Mademoiselle Clotilde being left alone together, became at once confidential.

"You are an old friend, as I see, my lord," she said. "I have heard much of you."

"Mademoiselle, if you will give me your confidence, I will value it like a mine of diamonds."

"It is yours, with all my heart," she said. "She has not been a well used woman."

"Certainly not," said Lord Festiniog. "My son Ittyd did not use her altogether well. For me, I behaved like a dog to her, once."

"Your behaviour, my lord——" here she paused.

"Festiniog," he suggested.

"I cannot pronounce *that*," she said. "I would if I could, but I can't. Say it again."

He did so, and she made two or three attempts. They were no use, and she ended by saying that she, for the sake of argument, would call him M. Bonnechose. He agreed to this, and she continued.

"Your behaviour, M. Bonnechose, was always very excellent to her. No one can find fault with you about it. She was married. Good. You did not know it. Good. You disputed it. That was right of you. Drummond had stolen her child. When that was proved and confessed to by Drummond, you allowed the fact. That was most honourable. But, were you good when you sent George Arnaud to sea with Barri? I do not think that you were."

"But I did not know it. I did not know that the facts were proved."

"Then I am misinformed," said Mademoiselle Clotilde, "that is all I can say."

"Who was your informant?"

"Drummond," said she.

"But, has he been making mischief between Mary and myself?"

"My lord, her position is this. He has told my cousin Arnaud, and she has told me, that since you have discovered the fact that George Arnaud is next in succession, you have been trying, in every way, to get rid of him. He will now say that you have succeeded in doing so; and, what is more, Marie might believe it."

"But, is the man here, back in London, and saying such abominable falsehoods?"

"It is perfectly certain, and what is more, he has threatened your lordship in my presence."

"The — What does he threaten me with, then?"

"He only says that you are a lost man without him. He declares that your property is dependent on him, that you do not know where certain deeds are, and that you never dare to face him."

"But when was he here last—yesterday?"

"No, this morning. He is in a very dangerous state. If I might detain your lordship, I would ask for a little advice. We want some, I assure you."

"I will give you all that it is in my power to give," said Lord Festiniog, "but I must ask you again, what has Drummond been saying?"

"My lord, how can I say? He has been telling Mrs. Arnaud that you are not Lord Festiniog at all; that there is some matter of an old marriage which he has discovered; that there is—I know not what. I cannot tell you, for I do not remember the whole."

"What has Mary said to this?"

"She has been calm as usual. I think that she has been prepared for a journey."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; but you must come back to-morrow. Do not delay here now."

Lord Festiniog decidedly agreed that he would come back on the morrow.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CATASTROPHE.

LORD FESTINIOG went back to No. 17, and was extremely well received there, by no one better than by old Madame Merton. Whatever that excellent old lady's temper might be previous to and after the arrival of Lord Festiniog, during his stay in the house she was all sunshine.

A most pleasant, chatty old woman ; slightly and lightly scandalous at first, until she saw that Lord Festiniog did not like it ; then quite as scandalous as ever, but in a moral manner, and without any levity. She pulled everybody's character to pieces quite as charmingly as ever, but finding that Lord Festiniog was religious, she did it in a religious way, which was quite as poignant as the other way. She discoursed about the repentance, and ultimate (as far as she could tell) salvation of great sinners, with illustrative anecdotes, which became moral from the tone of voice in which she told them. She let Lord Festiniog know very soon that she had repented, and then, treating him as a man on the verge of the grave, told him of what. His lordship told her that he was very glad to hear it, in fact, congratulated her. She received his congratulations with a smile, and hoped that he himself would some day find peace.

Madame always, during the short time which followed, treated Lord Festiniog as a repentant sinner, who might yet be saved. She never hinted at his turning Roman Catholic, or at his marrying her last importation from France, Mademoiselle Clotilde. She always vilipended her spiritual director as a noodle, and ordered Clotilde out of the room when Lord Festiniog came. Still, to use a vulgarism, she took her change out of Lord Festiniog, by pointing out to him that he was the author of all the woes of her family. Had he been kinder to Iltyd, Iltyd never would have made a secret marriage ; had he acknowledged Mary Arnaud's marriage at once, she never would have been thrown against James Drummond (which was totally untrue) ; had he, in short, done anything but what he had done, George Drummond never would have been drowned, Barri would not have been an idiot, and the last horrible catastrophe never would have occurred at all. Lord Festiniog was, in spite of his better reason, obliged to admit that it would have been better for him if No. 17 had never existed, and far better for No. 17 if he had never come near it.

The last disaster which had befallen this most unlucky number in that most unhappy street is almost too terrible to be written down. Mary Arnaud had eloped almost openly with James Drummond. They had started off together from the London Bridge Station; they had been tracked to Paris, and so to Vienna, with all the acumen of an associated European police. At the last-named town they were arrested, and discovered to be Lord and Lady Hartley on their wedding tour. A great deal of acrimonious correspondence followed on the subject of this arrest, both at the time of which we are speaking and afterwards; still, the fact remained the same; Mary Arnaud had gone off with James Drummond, and the ferocious virtue assumed by the injured family from Paris was an awful thorn in Lord Festiniog's side.

Why had they been pursued? Whose business was it to interfere with their arrangements? If Mary, who had lived so excellent and so virtuous a life, chose, at the end of it, to cast reputation to the winds, to go away with a man who had treated her in the most shameful manner, with the man who had actually stolen her child, now drowned, whose business was it, again? Why, no one's.

Drummond had played fast and loose with Lord Festiniog, but Lord Festiniog had forgiven him, and, on the whole, was kindly disposed to him. He was not the first man, thought Lord Festiniog, who went to the devil after a woman.

"As the late Mrs. Crawley said," he added, for he was old, rich, and virtuous, "I like the man's devotion to Mary; it is a fine trait in the man's character.

"And Mary's devotion to Iltyd also," thought his lordship, "that is gone. A very good woman. I am sorry I ever quarrelled with her. Well, God forgive us all our sins. I'll go to No. 17, and talk to them all."

So he went, and heard more particulars. It was only after a second visit there that he heard the whole truth from Rhyader, who met him at the shop-door.

Mary Arnaud and James Drummond had not only gone off together, but had taken title and other deeds to the amount of two hundred thousand pounds with them. Hence, the hunt after them to Vienna—hence, the fact of the arrest of the innocent Lord and Lady Hartley, who were twenty years younger than either of them. And hence, the fact that Lord Festiniog, being persistently bullied by Lord and Lady Rhyader, was eternally at No. 17, very frequently, during the absences of Madame Merton, in the company of Mademoiselle Clotilde.

CHAPTER XXX.

AM RHEIN.

THE dawn comes flushing up over the brown-grey crags and the shattered castles, lighting them one by one, and creeping lower and lower down the iron cliffs which confine the mighty river, and hurl it in its anger from side to side of the glen. Wreaths of mist still linger among the closely-packed vineyards, and along the dark rift of the Switzerthal, which on the opposite bank sends its flashing, sparkling contribution of water into the great Rhine itself. The swine-herd's horn is heard, not unmusically, in the little town below, which is awaking to the tinkle of the bell for early mass. Now the sun reaches the river, and lights it with gleams of gold, green, and silver, most beautiful to behold; and now it has sketched out all the hills, and the solemn peace of the autumnal sabbath has settled down upon the beautiful Rhine lands.

Nowhere, neither on vineyard, on crag, on castle, on church-tower, nor on wooded valley, rich with the purple saffron, did the sun shine with more pleasant radiance than on the crucifix on the hill above the town, where the copse and vineyards end, and the broad cornfields clothe the level plateau as far as the eye can reach. Here four roads meet, and at the meeting-place is the little shrine, with the great figure above it, a landmark for some miles either in sunshine or in snow.

Only one figure was in sight on this morning, that of a woman kneeling in long devotion, with her head bent. So long did she remain in this attitude, that a little bird flew down and settled quite close to her, uttering a low, melancholy note. At length she rose, and turned her face towards the sunlight, looking round on the glorious prospect. It was Mary Arnaud.

Pale and harassed, but with a quiet, calm confidence in her face, which would have dispelled at once any fear of her, had it been seen by those most interested. The fresh morning air, and the pleasure of the landscape, put a slight colour in her cheeks, as she set her feet down hill towards the town.

Some of the earliest risers in the place were the patients of Dr. Holland, who had there, in the old convent of Marienburg, above the highest roofs, an establishment for people who were ill, or fancied themselves to be so. It was called a hydropathic sanatorium, but it was a very agreeable place, with quite as agreeable a table d'hôte as any near. The guests on this morning had

returned from their early walks or baths, and had sat down to breakfast with the voracious appetite gained by foreign air and early hours, and there was a short silence; but very soon conversation began, and ran mainly on one point, the arrival of Mr. Hickson and his *distingué* looking sister the day before. They were discussed from every point of view, and it was agreed that she, at all events, would do. If they could get no other entertainment out of her, they could speculate about her and copy her exquisite clothes to the best of their ability.

On one side of the doctor sat the father of the guests, a man of three seasons, a fat old gentleman from Porto Rico, and on the other the clergyman, a reverend London rector, the guest of two years. These two had the doctor's ear.

"And what shall you make of your new patient, doctor?" said Porto Rico.

"I am almost afraid I shall want your assistance," said the doctor, turning to the reverend gentleman.

"Mind troubled?" said the reverend gentleman. "Well, I have been used to sick beds for forty years, and I am ready for him."

"I was not referring to spiritual consolation," said the doctor; "I meant that I fear I shall have to ask you to read the burial service over him."

"So bad as that. Poor fellow! poor fellow! Ay! ay!"

"I fear so. He is in a state of intense nervous depression, from which, if he does not rally——" The doctor said no more.

"How fortunate that he has a relation with him," said Porto Rico.

"She is most devoted to him," said the doctor. "I should be almost powerless without her. She has had him in this state, or even worse, ever since Antwerp, and has only got him on by slow degrees. He would have died at Antwerp, were it not for her."

"How did she manage to find us out, I wonder?" said the clergyman.

"I knew her in Paris," said the doctor; "I knew her family. And you two do me the favour not to talk about her at all; there are very painful family circumstances which render it as well not. Her brother has been living too hard, and also has met with some great disappointment. I can only say of her that she is the noblest of women."

She entered shortly after he had finished speaking, and took her seat in the place which was left for her next the clergyman. She talked quite calmly about indifferent topics, the scenery, the

air, the river, and then, turning to the doctor, asked him what he thought of her brother's state that morning.

"I think it is extremely grave, madam," said the doctor. "Still, such unremitting attention as yours must do more than I can. He is very uneasy without you."

"I have been away from him this morning," she said, "for a lovely walk. I will spend the rest of the day with him."

She went back to his room, and the doctor came with her. There, on a sofa before a window which looked down upon the Rhine, lay the miserable wreck called James Drummond, trembling at every sound, and staring at them as they entered with dilated pupils and quivering lips. He tried to speak, but he only produced an inarticulate babble. With the aid of the doctor's and Mary's arm he tried to walk across the room, but his knees smote together and they were afraid of his fainting. The doctor made a little weak brandy and water for him, but at the sight of it he gave an inarticulate howl, dreadful to hear, and fell back on his couch.

"He has been so ever since Antwerp," said Mary. "He cannot bear the smell of the brandy."

"Yes, I will try opiates," said the doctor. "When did the worst of this begin, did you say?"

"At Antwerp, the day I joined him. In fact, I found him in the state I have mentioned to you."

"He must have had some violent shock, surely, in addition to his intemperate habits."

"Well, he had," said Mrs. Arnaud. "I was the cause of it."

"H'm. Had you not better write home?"

"That is totally impossible," said Mrs. Arnaud. "Rhyader, or possibly Festiniog, would be thrusting their hands in and ruining everything. I must take the sole responsibility. Will he die?"

"I cannot say, it is very doubtful."

"Will he speak before he dies?"

"He may or he may not. One thing is certain, for a long time no subject in the least degree likely to agitate him must be broached. That would be death."

"Then I must wait here and watch."

"There is no doubt of that if you wish to have him speak again reasonably. But reflect again, madame, is there not one friend to whom you could confide?"

"Not one, doctor. I have no friend whom I could trust—who would not commit an indiscretion. I could have confided in my poor drowned son, but he was lost in saving his cousin. No, I must go through it myself."

So she took up her watch alone and unaided, and such a watch. Beside the couch of a man whom she had come to save, whose feeble hand, whenever it touched hers gave a gentle pressure which made her almost mad, whose eyes never met hers without an expression of tenderness and gratitude. Such was her watch, with the full sense that on his recovery, when she had wrested his secret from him, the poor wretch must be rudely undeceived as to her feelings for him, and by herself—by no other.

He had come to her wild with drink and rage, and had made a terrible scene. She had lost her temper, and had spoken words to him as fierce as any of his own, and so they had parted, as she believed, for the last time; it was not so, however; they were bound to meet again, and that suddenly.

Five hours after she had parted from him, she got a letter from him telling her that he was ruined, but that he was determined to drag down others in his ruin; that he was mad, but that he would make some others as mad as he was. He had taken Lord Festiniog's title-deeds and securities to the value of two hundred thousand pounds, and was gone with them to America. One single word from her would stay him, even now, and it was to be sent by telegram to Gravesend, to a certain address.

She did not hesitate for an instant. She telegraphed the word "yes," and received in answer, "Hôtel du Parc, Antwerp. Hickson."

She went to his office, and told his head clerk that she was going to join his master for a tour on the Continent, and that his letters were to be addressed to Vienna. The head clerk had long suspected that something of the kind would occur sooner or later between Mrs. Arnaud and James Drummond, and was not at all surprised. He no more believed that they were going to Vienna, than he believed that they were going to Timbuctoo, but, like a good servant, he wished to cover his master's retreat, and did so, to the confusion of the police. A short note from Drummond, dated Gravesend, informed him that his master had not only gone abroad, but had taken Lord Festiniog's securities with him; at which point in the plot, he considered it necessary to communicate with Lord Rhyader, and save himself.

Meanwhile, Mary had found out that there was but one boat to Antwerp by which he could go, and, taking a very hurried farewell of every one, she put herself on board of it. He joined the boat at Gravesend, and she kept close, watching him carefully with her veil down.

He was very ill, so ill that it seemed to require an almost desperate effort on his part to get to his cabin. He had no

servant, that was a comfort. His portmanteau was brought on board by the porters, and stowed with the other passenger's luggage. He went to his private cabin at once, and lay down. They were hardly out of the Thames before Mary Arnaud took the Belgian captain into her confidence. She told him that her brother was very ill, and that she had followed him. As he was undoubtedly very ill, the captain pitied her, and gave her every assistance in his power when they got to Antwerp. At the Parc she had taken possession of him entirely as his sister ; but he was delirious, and did not know her.

His keys she had, but they revealed nothing. The papers were not in his trunks ; that she very soon discovered. Where were they ? No one knew, save the madman who lay gasping on the bed before her. The task before her was to save him until he could speak articulately and think consecutively. Then she knew that she could have his secret from him, for she was certain on that one point.

But his disease fought terribly against nature, and it was only against overwhelming odds that she got him to St. Goar. There, to her horror, the thing which she longed for, yet dreaded, happened ; the man began to recognise her, and to try and call her by name, to press her hand and, as he in his vanity thought, to believe that she had relented after all.

She watched him like a sister, no sister was ever more diligent or more faithful to a brother. And yet she hated the man. She had set a certain duty before her—that of recovering the lost papers for Lord Festiniog, “who had been kind to her.” she knew perfectly well that if any of them interfered the papers would be lost ; and so, silent and unassisted, she kept watch over the man she liked least in all the world.

He began to mend before the beginning of October, and she began to dread the scene which must ultimately come. But that scene, which she had so often featured to herself, never came at all. Half the evils of this world are purely imaginary. The curse of successful nations, like the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic, is the anticipation of evil, as may be seen in our everyday history, and is called familiarly, and somewhat foolishly, by the daily and weekly journals “panic.” Mrs. Arnaud had prepared herself for a state of things which never occurred.

James Drummond got by degrees so much better that he came to the table d'hôte, and ultimately went out driving with his reverence and Porto Rico. On his return from one of these drives, he asked Mary to come to his room, as he wished to speak to her very particularly.

She came, and sat down by him, not daring to begin the conversation.

"Mrs. Arnaud," he said, "they tell me that you have been utterly devoted to me during my illness. You must perceive that I am not long for this world, and I wish to make a clean breast as regards you, for my memory has quite come back now."

"Yes, I have pulled you through, James," she said.

"James! Ah, well, it is all the same now. If that word had been said like that years ago, things might have been different. For what reason, Mrs. Arnaud, have you paid this remarkable attention to me?"

It was an awful question, an unanswerable question. Mrs. Arnaud sat dumb.

"I see that you cannot answer me. I thought for a while, during my delirium, that you had come after me for myself. Now that my intellect is restored, I know that you have only tended me to get the truth about Lord Festiniog's papers. So good a nurse should be properly repaid. You have ransacked my trunks, I suppose?"

Mary Arnaud was obliged to say "Yes."

"Thank you. If you will open that one nearest the window you will find everything you want. No, not there, my dear madam, nor there, neither; press that little spring on the lid. There you are."

She stood up before him with the papers in her hand, but without a word to say for herself.

"Mary Arnaud," he said, "you are answerable for those papers now, not I. Take them back to the people whom you always loved better than you did me. You are absolutely heartless."

"Because I could not love you!" she flashed out.

"No, I am not a loveable person. But you are so utterly deceitful. You have saved my life for a few weeks, and you have tended me like a sister or a saint. And for what? Why, to get those papers. I have no gratitude towards you at all; you may take them, and go to the devil with them."

"May God forgive you, James Drummond, as I do," she said, with the papers in her hand. "Now, good-bye."

"Stop, Mary," he said, "in decency's sake, stop. You must go through those papers, and give me a receipt for them. That is only fair."

She was so silly and confused that she did it. She counted the papers, and gave a receipt for eight. The doctor and Porto Rico were called in to witness the document, which she left with him, and then she departed.

"Doctor," she said to that functionary, "I am going to England."

"You cannot possibly take your brother, madam," said he.

"I am aware of it; but I must go. Is his situation so critical?"

"I cannot tell at all. He may live to be eighty if he leaves off drinking *now*. I never thought that I should have pulled him through. I will take the best care of him."

Mrs. Arnaud at once thanked him, and left the corridor with singular haste, the doctor thought. But the steamboat was nearly due, and she had to pack, a matter about which she was very nimble.

The steamboat did not come to the wharf, the Rhine was low that year. She put off in a boat, with her trunks, and scrambled on board. James Drummond got from his bed, and saw her go. He gave her *bon voyage*.

"Curse you, my lady," he said. "I have been angling at your worthless heels for too many years. You have tried to conceal your hatred from me, but you have not quite succeeded. You have been the cause of my drinking, a habit which never gave me any pleasure. I took to it because you scorned me, I leave it because you scorn me still. I think that I have prepared a nice little bed of nettles for you, madam, when you get home."

The doctor came to see him later in the day. He was surprised to find his patient so much better. His patient entered into conversation with him.

"To what do you attribute my late illness, doctor?"

"To drinking."

"Exactly. I have always hated it; and now I am going to give it up, for I never got any real pleasure from it."

"It is time you did give it up," said the doctor. "You will not survive such another bout as this."

"I know: it was that woman who has just gone, who drove me to it."

"Your sister?"

"My sister! she is as much my sister as you are! She is one of the most swindling thieves in Europe. Has she paid her bill?"

The doctor thought it worth while to step down and inquire. Mary, certainly, in her haste, had not gone through that ceremony, and the doctor returned to inform him of the fact. The invalid laughed.

"You will find my cash-box in that trunk, doctor; bring it here and I will pay you."

"My dear sir, there is no need to——" said the doctor.

"Bring it here, my dear sir," said Drummond. "Short reckonings make long friendships." The cash-box was brought to him, and the key of it was at the top of his dressing-case. It was quickly opened.

The doctor saw on the top of a pile of bank-notes a yellow parchment, evidently very old. Drummond's trembling hand selected a note for £100, which he placed in the doctor's, begging him to carry on the account between them. The doctor received it gravely, and Drummond locked up the box with great rapidity. "There is ten thousand or more here, doctor," he said, "but there are no thieves in Germany. I think that if you will send up Gretchen with some more of that draught, I will go to sleep."

"Gretchen is in the kitchen," said the doctor. "If you do not mind new faces, I will send up the other woman; but, after all, I think that I had better bring you your sleeping draught myself."

"It is all one to me," said Drummond. The doctor gave it to him, and he went to sleep.

Drummond was fast asleep now, so fast asleep that he was nearly waking in eternity. Gretchen, the honest German woman, was really in the kitchen again, and had a hard day's work among the patients. The doctor met the "new woman" on the stairs, and said to her, "Carlina, you had better go up and sit beside Mr. Drummond."

"Why do you call me Carlina?" she asked.

"It is your real name, is it not?" said the doctor, coolly. "It is on your certificates."

"Did the lady who has just left ever——?" said she.

"I should think it impossible," said the doctor. "I do not suppose that she would trouble herself much about you. I do not suppose that she has ever seen you."

"I have taken good care about *that*," said Carlina, as she walked upstairs to her duty.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE END OF JAMES DRUMMOND'S SCHEME.

CARLINA approached James Drummond's bed with a curious mixture of feeling regarding him. She had loved the man, and,

in one way, loved him still. He had used her as his plaything first, and afterwards as his tool. She had submitted to him, worked for him, and betrayed him to Lord Festiniog. She had done everything she could to ruin him, and bring him once more to her feet. She had not succeeded. Mrs. Arnaud always stood like a good angel between him and her. She had worked about through crafty, secret ways to separate them, but that seemed, at last, impossible. When Mary Arnaud followed James Drummond, she followed also, and hid herself in the house where they had taken refuge.

She listened to what they said to one another on the occasion which has been described above. She saw that Mary Arnaud had never loved Drummond, and that Drummond had ceased to love Mary Arnaud.

"His heart shall be mine again," she said. "I will get a new power over him. Somehow, I care not how. I listened to every word which passed between them, and if you—(here she addressed her *daimon*)—mean to tell me that he told her the whole truth, I will be burnt alive."

So she entered the sick man's room. He was sleeping very quietly; there was not the remotest need for her to hurry herself. She knew from spying where his keys were. She took out his cash-box and examined it. There were about six thousand pounds in notes. She first took two hundred-pound notes for necessary expenses, then she took three, then she took four, and locked up the cash-box, virtuously refusing to take another farthing. She came of a very decent banditti family, and the honour of her family appealed to her strongly not to take more than was absolutely necessary. She had actually locked up the cash-box, when the Neapolitan blood of her mother came through her head like a wave, and told her to take the whole six thousand pounds. But then the blood of her father, who was a Genoese, and consequently a calculating man, a trader, came to her assistance, and said, "The doctor knows that there is nearly ten thousand pounds there; if you take it all you will be found out." She invoked the Virgin for this suggestion, which doubtless came from above. She opened the box, took out another hundred pounds, and felt transcendently virtuous.

Is she the only person in the world who has thought that she has made her peace with God by committing a small crime when she might have committed a greater one?

She went to look at the sleeping man. He was sleeping very quietly. She had been familiar with him in old times, and now she was but his nurse. He was lying, as she thought, uneasily,

and she tucked his clothes in. A yellow old paper dropped from the tumbled clothes. She picked it up, and, taking it to the candle, read it through.

"You are one artful sinner, James Drummond," she said. "I see now why you got rid of that woman Arnaud in the way you did. After your illness you were tired of her. I can't think what you ever saw in her, myself. Now I have you in my hands, my lad. The doctor, when you unlocked the cash-box and gave it back, could never have seen this; even *he* would not have withstood the temptation. Why, this paper is worth a hundred thousand pounds."

Well, we will deal with this wondrous paper afterwards. It was worth nothing, but James Drummond and Lord Festiniog both thought that it was. Not to make any mystery, it was a grant of the whole Barri estates to Tom Killigrew, signed by Charles the Second. *There was no date*, and but one witness, whose name was undecipherable, but who had written pathetically under the word, "Don't know what it is all about."

She secured this paper, and then went to see after the sick man again. He was extremely quiet—so much so that she moved the bedclothes from his face. She looked at him only once—she had seen the thing before. She went down to the doctor at once, and said, "I wish you to come up with me."

The doctor came, but fifty doctors could not alter circumstances—James Drummond was dead.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD FESTINIOG'S CONFESSION.

THE present writer is not the only person who considers that the practice of confession, as carried out in certain communions, is a most objectionable thing. Still, there is much to be said for it by its admirers. It is used in almost all sects under various names. Some call it "confession," some "religious advice," some "experiences of conversion." All mean, *to a certain extent only*, the same thing—the desire to confide to some one else what is too great a burden for your own heart. Lord Festiniog was one of the last men to go to confession, and yet he did so most decidedly.

It comes to very much the same thing in the end. People want to tell the truth and get excused, even if they are not Catholics.

Lord Festiniog wanted confession and absolution most emphatically. He knew that he could find some one to whom he could pour out his whole soul, and he knew that he could get excused, but he wanted to be absolved, and that his conscience told him that he could not very easily be.

There must be something very delightful in belonging to a religion which provides a not peculiarly literate man to answer for your sins. Lord Festiniog knew that no such easy-going faith was available in this world, but he got all that he wanted from a priest of the *Anglican* church—that is to say, confession and absolution.

It occurred to him, that as he was extremely vexed and worried in every way, he would go and walk in Pall Mall. Why he should have done so is no business of ours. Pall Mall is not a place for a disturbed spirit. Lord Festiniog belonged to the Reform Club, but he was so vexed that he walked into the Travellers' by mistake, went into the morning room, and took up a newspaper.

The porter had followed him.

"Are you a member, sir?" that functionary asked. "I do not know you."

Lord Festiniog was going to swear, but a soft voice at his elbow stopped him.

"You have come here to see me, Lord Festiniog, I think?"

"If you choose to put it so," said Lord Festiniog, "Why—good gracious, it is Archdeacon Luxmore!"

"Let us come to the Athenæum," said the archdeacon; "we are both members there."

And at the Athenæum Lord Festiniog made his confession to the archdeacon. We are about to betray the secrets of the confessional.

When they were settled comfortably, Lord Festiniog said, "You know, my dear archdeacon, that I am a fool?"

"My religion and my training as a gentleman prevent my ever contradicting any one," said the archdeacon.

"Exactly. If you like I will prove it to you," said Lord Festiniog.

"I will take your word for fact, my dear friend," said the archdeacon. "I am inclined entirely to agree with you, without any proof."

Lord Festiniog continued, in a tone which was at first cross, but which afterwards grew more genial and confidential,

"I never had much education in the ways of the world. I spoilt my two boys, and let them do pretty much as they liked. Gervase always did as I wished him, though I have had words with *him* at times. Iltyd never cared very much about me, but I loved him the best of the two. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, Iltyd took his own way when he grew up. He married a milliner. Mary is a most remarkable woman, archdeacon. Few women like her. I thought that she was not really married, and that Iltyd had deceived her. I and my son Rhyader treated her like one of the family, and she was our humble servant. After twenty odd years, she flew out at us, defied us, and said, and, what is more, proved, that she was properly married at Leghorn.

"Good. We had a quarrel, but she won. And then comes the most remarkable part of the story. My lawyer, James Drummond, had access to her for business purposes in Italy, and fell in love with her; not in an ordinary way, but in a *mad* way. I will make matters as short for you as I can; but I must tell you that he was persistently *mad* about that woman, and that he stole her child, my own grandson, thinking by this means to engage her heart."

"A curious way of doing it, was it not?" said the archdeacon.

"He thought," said Lord Festiniog, "that if she was left without any tie, she would be more easily won. He adopted the boy he had stolen, and brought him up. Now the most astounding thing is this, archdeacon. Whether the man Drummond managed it or not, I can't tell. After above twenty years of friendliness, that woman, Mary Arnaud, quarrelled with me. She started as a milliner at No. 17, Hartley Street, and the very first person she met in her house *was her own son*, whom she did not know from Adam."

"How on earth did that happen?" said the archdeacon.

"I don't know," said Lord Festiniog, "but happen it did. I did not know that the young man was my grandson. How should I? I liked him well enough, and of course would have done anything for him. In the meantime I drowned him."

"That seems a mistake as it stands," said the archdeacon.

"I did not mean to do it," said Lord Festiniog. "I sent him abroad with Rhyader's son, as his tutor. He found out that he, in case of Barri's death, would be heir, and he—well——"

"Pitched the boy overboard?" said the archdeacon.

"Why, no; he drowned himself to save his rival."

"A noble creature," said the archdeacon. "Well?"

"It is all very good to say 'Well!'" said Lord Festiniog, testily; "but everything is in the most infernal mess. Iltyd's son, who was called George Drummond, is drowned. The boy Barri seems a hopeless idiot in consequence of the sufferings he went through in his shipwreck. Mary Arnaud, Iltyd's own wife, after twenty years of good behaviour, has bolted to the Continent with my family lawyer, taking papers to the value of £200,000; taking, in fact, one which could not be replaced, and which would utterly ruin me if it was discovered."

"What could that be?" said the archdeacon, for priests are curious.

"Well, my dear sir, if that paper was correct, I am no more Lord Festiniog than you are the Pope of Rome. This is safe with you?"

"Certainly; I am accessory after the fact," said the archdeacon. "Proceed in the tale of your wrongs."

"I think that I ought to be treated with more respect by Rhyader, and I have fallen in love. At sixty-two—what do you think of that? What advice do you give me?"

"You seem to have made a tolerable mess of it among you," said the archdeacon. "If I was in your place I should most certainly do nothing. What is the missing paper, and who is your new lady-love?"

"Well, never mind about the lady; I may get over that business; I have done so once or twice before. The paper is a grant of all we hold to the Killigrews by Charles the Second."

"That," said the archdeacon, "is dangerous; and you should not have told me. However, I will shrive you on condition that you do the right."

And what was that?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SURPRISE FROM MADAME MERTON.

LORD FESTINIOG had long ago decided that life would be worth having were it not for its troubles. At nearly the same time Cornwall Lewis had come to the conclusion that life would be possible without its pleasures. Victor Hugo would make out

that they both meant the same thing. But we are not so clever as Victor Hugo, and are perfectly certain that they meant something entirely different. Lord Festiniog desired quiet, diligent action, and Sir George Lewis did not. Lord Festiniog said always that the women were driving him to the deuce in his old age. Sir George Lewis never said anything of the kind.

Lord Festiniog, however, had very hard times. He was sitting one evening with Mademoiselle Clotilde at No. 17, when the door was opened, and the renegade Mary Arnaud walked in, and, without the least remark, took off her bonnet, placed it on the sofa, and requested Lord Festiniog to poke the fire. She then sat down.

"I want some tea," she said to Clotilde; "I have been travelling."

Clotilde departed with amazing alacrity, and left Mary and Lord Festiniog alone together, to his immense horror. He felt that an explanation must come, and he hated explanations.

"Well, my lord," she began, "I think that I have made everything right for you. Here are the papers."

"The papers which you took, Mary?"

"The papers which I took? I think you mean the papers which he took. I got them from him. Here they are."

"I thought that you had been false to me," said Lord Festiniog.

"Then you must be a noodle," said Mary Arnaud. "Look at these papers. They are, I fancy, correct. After trusting me so many years, you might trust me for a few more."

Lord Festiniog looked at her with admiration, and then he went through the papers. "Mary," he said, "you only went with the poor fellow who is dead to get these papers for us."

"I do not understand you, my lord. I went with him to get these papers. I allow that. That I was true to Iltyd—I neither insult myself nor you by going further with the matter. I got these papers from him; but you speak of him as dead. I left him mending."

"I have had a telegram which tells me that he is dead, however."

And Lord Festiniog watched her carefully, to see how she would take the news.

"Poor James," said Mary Arnaud, without a show of emotion; "and so he is dead. Poor fellow. He loved me very tenderly, and I liked him, to some extent. But I am not sorry he is dead, on the whole."

"My dear Mary——"

"Your dear Mary! Has not the man been the very bane of

my whole life? A falser friend never existed, neither to you nor to me. Can I possibly pretend to a regret which I do not feel? Are you sorry?"

"You are so terribly blunt," said Lord Festiniog. "I don't mean to say that I am very sorry."

"Then, what do you suppose I am," said Mrs. Arnaud, "at the removal of the irritation of my life? Lord Festiniog, do you know that when I left him he hated me?"

"Perhaps," thought the old man, "that may have something to do with your singular coolness about him." And he quietly went over the abstracted papers.

"The only paper which was of any vast value," said he, quietly, "is not here; your errand has been perfectly fruitless, I am sorry to say. He lied roundly, and has utterly deceived you. The paper which would ruin us is missing."

"I thought that he was rather easy with me," said Mrs. Arnaud. "What is to be done now, in the name of goodness? Has he destroyed it, do you think, in spite?"

"I wish to heaven he had," said Lord Festiniog. "I was a fool to keep it so long, I know that. If Rhyader knew of it! But he cannot have destroyed it; it would be a most friendly action."

"Well, I don't know what is to be done *now*," said Mrs. Arnaud. "He knew the contents of this paper, of course."

"Why, of course he did, my dear soul, he *found* it, and pointed out its value to me. Don't you know that he said to you once that I was not Lord Festiniog at all? If another family gets hold of that paper I am poorer than the poorest beggar who whines for pence at a crossing. If it is known that I had it in my possession, and was ever aware of its contents, I should be utterly disgraced as well as ruined. In God's name keep all this from Rhyader—don't let a soul alive know of what has passed between us."

"How charmingly you look to-night, dear Lord Festiniog," said a voice, which made them both start to their feet, with an exclamation of terror from the lady, and a loud oath from the gentleman.

There, behind them, stood old Madame Merton, charmingly dressed and smiling; they were absolutely dumb with utter horror.

"I have been listening to you two for the last five minutes," she said, "and have heard every word you uttered. I am a most unscrupulous listener; I learnt the habit at my *magasin* in Paris, where, to tell the truth, I made money by it. The instant I heard Marie's voice in the passage, I pulled my old rheumatic bones upstairs, and here I am. You, Lord Festiniog, look as though you wished that I was anywhere else."

"Madame, I have not that power of concealing my thoughts, which is possessed in such an eminent degree by your charming nation, and by no member of it more than yourself. I wish, Madame, you had been at—(he was going to say Jericho, but substituted)—Paris before you had heard what you have."

"My lord," said the old woman, with a strange, indescribable radiance in her face, which utterly puzzled and surprised Lord Festiniog; "my lord, try to recall what I *have* heard."

"You have heard me confess my own dishonour, madam."

"Ay?" cried the old woman, "and I have heard my daughter vindicate *hers*, and so, what is yours to me? My own long-suffering Marie, take your mother's blessing, and try to forgive her for ever distrusting you."

They were between the door and him, and so Lord Festiniog was obliged to escape to the window, against which he leant while there was silence in the room, broken only by a few sobs.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LORD FESTINIOG'S COURTSHIP.

"Now, my dear people," said Madame Merton, sinking quietly on the sofa, "we three had better put our heads together over this business. This paper must be got hold of and burnt. I have managed a few things in my time, and I fancy that you could not have a better adviser."

"Madam, certainly not!" said Lord Festiniog, "but you must perceive, from what I have let fall, that my honour is in your hands. I can move no further in the matter. My hands are clean about it (which was a fiction). I cannot tell what I shall do."

"There is one thing you will not do," said Madame Merton; "you will not act, or speak to Lord Rhyader, or any other human being, until you have consulted with us. You will promise that?"

Lord Festiniog thought for a little; at last he said, "Yes, I will promise that, I think that I can say that much."

"To be sure," said Madame Merton; "and come to us to-morrow morning. We will do nothing until we see you, you may depend upon that."

So Lord Festiniog went.

He knew that he was partly consenting to a dishonourable action. He most entirely thought that his son Rhyader would have gone at once to the other family, and told the whole truth to their utter ruin. Yet he could not determine what to do. As he went downstairs, there was nothing, as it appeared to him, staring him in the face but utter, sheer ruin. He was not like a man beside himself, because old training had given him the habit of keeping his thoughts to himself, but he was utterly and entirely at his wits' end.

As he came into the hall, Clotilde came to meet him with a light.

"My lord," she said, "come into the little back-parlour, which is now empty, and speak to me; I see from your face that you are in great trouble, you must let me share it."

He followed her in, and sat beside her on the sofa.

He came very near her, but she did not seem to object in any way whatever. He took her hand in his, and she did not withdraw it; and then he made a fool of himself, not for the first time in his life.

"Clotilde," he said, "I am a very old man, is it in any way possible that you can love me? I will try to make you——"

"You need not try," said Clotilde. "I do love you beyond any other man in the world."

"But, Clotilde, some terrible things have happened. I dare not ask you for your hand until—until—I know not when."

"For my hand!" said Clotilde, wondering, "you have got it, have you not—at least, my right hand? You shall have the other, if you like."

"I mean your hand in marriage."

She stared at him, but without withdrawing her hand. "Why, you never thought of marrying *me*?"

"I certainly did."

"My dear lord, pray banish the idea at once and for ever. I like you better than any man I have ever seen, except my grandfather, who was very like you, though I fancy he had more of the grand air than even you have. Come, there is a kiss for you, grandpapa. If I ever marry any one, I will ask you to give me away. But I fancy, myself, I do not care about a husband—husbands and wives perpetually disconcert one another; there is only one other man in the world who can make himself a worse nuisance to a woman than her husband."

"Who is that?" said Lord Festiniog; "her brother?"

"Oh, no! her lover," replied Clotilde. "Brothers are by no means objectionable. If you quarrel with them you can make it

up again ; and even if you do not, they never shoot themselves, or another man, or, what is still more important, yourself. Husbands and lovers are a mistake. Now, we will be real friends."

"Certainly," said Lord Festiniog, and before he had any time to say more, she went on,

"Look at D'Arey and Heloise, I would not change places with her, although she has become Lady Hartop. Nobody cares to receive her, because she kept shop here. No, every one is not so generous as you are, Lord Festiniog ; we will be friends, if you please, but nothing else."

"Well ! well !" said Lord Festiniog, "I would have made you happy, in my way. Be happy in your own."

"My dear grandpapa," said Clotilde, "will you have the goodness to consider what a life we should have led with the Rhyaders if we had ever married ?"

"Hah !" said Lord Festiniog. "Well, my dear—yes—I did not think of that. It is better as it is ; oh, yes ! it is far better as it is, though he did urge me once."

"Now, then, we are comfortable," said Clotilde. "Tell me now, as we are in entire confidence, what is going on upstairs ?"

"But I promised not to mention the matter to any human being, if I recollect."

"If you don't tell me all about it, I will tell Rhyader that you proposed to me," said Clotilde.

Lord Festiniog forgot, at once, his duties as senator, father, and gentleman. He told Clotilde every word of what had passed upstairs, but bound her to secrecy as regarded every other human being in the whole world.

"I sha'n't tell anybody," she said. "I wish it had been possible to tell Heloise, for she is the most artful little minx in the world ; but she has made the mistake of marrying, and is therefore unworthy of confidence. She would tell her husband. You had better leave the matter with those two souls upstairs."

"I suppose I had better for the present, but I am sorely puzzled, and I dare not tell Rhyader. You have been a kind friend to me, Clotilde——"

"And have prevented you making a fool of yourself," she added.

"Hardly yet," said Lord Festiniog, "that still depends on the powers above," and he pointed accidentally with one of Clotilde's fingers, and not his own, to the upper storey, where Madame Merton and Mrs. Arnaud were seated in conclave.

At this moment there came a loud knock at the door. They drew suddenly apart and were silent.

This last incident may appear strained and improbable to those critics who do not reflect that the same thing happens in most London houses at least once in five minutes, and that they had been talking for at least twenty *without* its happening. The improbability of the thing lies in its not having happened before.

Some people were in the passage asking for Lord Festiniog. "By heaven," that nobleman exclaimed, "they are coming in here." And, indeed, Rachel opened the door, and admitted Mrs. Arnaud's dog, before heard of in these pages. Clotilde, with the fervour of her nation, at once caught him to her bosom and carried him to the opposite sofa. But that did not prevent Rachel announcing Lord Rhyader and Mr. Barri; nor did it prevent Lord Festiniog from sitting bolt upright, with an expression on his face like that of a man who has robbed a bank, and is fully conscious of having the whole proceeds on his person when he is arrested by the police.

Suppose that terrible old Merton was to hobble into the room now, and make some frightful disclosure before she could be stopped. Suppose she ever were to know the frightful nonsense which he had been talking to Clotilde. Suppose—well, he supposed everything which a guilty man will when he fears detection, and he looked such a perfect noodle that his own son scarcely recognised him.

"How are you, father?" said Lord Rhyader.

"I don't know," said Lord Festiniog. "I thought I did this morning, but I'll be hanged if I do now."

The boy came towards him, but very unsteadily. Lord Festiniog met him and put him on the sofa beside him. "This is one of your bad days Barri, eh?"

"Yes," said Barri, "one of the days when everything goes round. But I am getting very much better, grandpa. I am beginning to read a little again now. You will never make a man of me, but you may make a scholar. Poor George Drummond, he died to save me, though it was against his interest. My heart would break with joy if I saw him again."

"We will not," said Lord Rhyader, "pursue that subject. George Drummond is drowned. Barri, go upstairs and see Madame Merton: who, the servant tells me, is there."

"No!" said Lord Festiniog, sharply, "send the boy into the street to walk about. Mademoiselle Clotilde, would you mind leaving us, and taking the dog with you?"

He went, and he opened the door for her, kissed her hand. He then sat down, looking anything but a noodle now, and confronted his son.

"Are you going to marry *that* lady, sir?" said Rhyader, haughtily, thereby putting the battlefield entirely in his father's hands.

"No, sir!" said Lord Festiniog. "I asked her to marry me just now, and her answer was at once dignified and sensible. She pointed out the difference in our ages, and, what is more, she showed what extreme opposition I should meet with from you. I desired to marry that lady, sir, and I asked her. She has refused me."

"She is a young lady of great sense," said Lord Rhyader.

"That is a civil thing to say to your own father, sir," said Lord Festiniog, who above all things wished to get into a passion, with some show of reason. "I do not see that I have done anything to give you reason to insult me."

"My dear father——"

"There, enough, sir, you can go. I desire to hold no more communication with you at the present moment. I am using every endeavour to keep a house over your head, and I am met in this way."

"But I assure you, my dear lord——"

"I am not," said Lord Festiniog, now nearly laughing, but taking a lesson from the school of Mademoiselle Clotilde, "to be pacified by endearments, however plausible. I request you to leave me, sir, and to believe that I am working for your good."

"I cannot understand it," said Lord Rhyader; "why have you turned against me suddenly, after so many years?"

"Rhyader, go away. There is more hatching in this old No. 17 than you dream of or must know about."

Lord Rhyader thought it best to go; and as he led poor struggling Barri along he thought, very sadly, that his father was losing his head, and that he would soon be master of the family.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MADAME MERTON GOES ON THE WAR TRAIL.

"MAMMA," said Mrs. Arnaud, when they were alone together, "did you actually suspect me?"

"My love, I did."

"Then you must make amends."

"Yes, in what way?"

"First, you must in future be kinder to all of us than you have hitherto been; and secondly, you must assist us by the whole power of your brain."

"I promise both things, my darling. Now let us get to work at once, and lose no time. From whom did Lord Festiniog get this telegram announcing James Drummond's death?"

"From Dr. Holland."

"I suppose that the dead man must have told him to telegraph to his lordship, then. You know more about the late man than any one else: had he any relations?"

"None, that I am aware of."

"What sort of a man is Dr. Holland? An upright man?"

"One of the noblest and most upright of men," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"That is a terrible nuisance. It is the way of the world. You can find rogues enough when you don't want them, and then when you want one particular man to be a rogue, you find him an honest man."

"Why do you desire him to be dishonest, mamma?"

"It is fortunate that your mother was born before you, simpleton," said the old lady. "Do not you see that by this time he has made an inventory of the dead man's goods, and has the paper in his possession?"

"That is perfectly true," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"How long were you there with him, did you say?"

"About a fortnight."

"What did you represent yourself to be?"

"His sister."

"Cannot you go back in the same capacity and take possession of everything? Why of course you can."

"I am sorry to say that we are checkmated there again," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"Why?"

"That woman Carlina, who helped him to take George from me at Ravenna, had followed him there, and she would be pretty sure to tell the truth, if it was only to spite me."

"That does not follow," said madam. "Post away and try; you can do no harm by that. Go and see how the land lies."

"It is rather a difficult thing for me, but if you advise——"

"I'll tell you what," said the old lady, "I'll go with you."

"My dear mamma, with your rheumatism!"

"I shall howl occasionally," she said coolly; "you will explain the reason of that to our fellow-voyagers if they exhibit any symp-

toms of terror or alarm. All my pain will be amply compensated for if I can have the opportunity of matching my art against a woman. You are an excellent woman, but you are a nigaude, my dear. This Italian woman may be worth talking to. I dare say that she will give us a vast deal of difficulty, but all that will be intense pleasure to me. I only live in a world of excitement. Get the things ready, and we will start to-morrow morning."

"But what are we going to do?" said Mrs. Arnaud. "It seems fearfully like a conspiracy."

"It is one, my dear," said Madame Merton. "But you must help in it. The family were very kind to you. And, moreover, you can scarcely help yourself, because by representing yourself as the dead man's sister, and getting possession, with your usual cleverness, of every paper but the right one, you are deep in it already."

This was obviously true, and Mrs. Arnaud abandoned herself to her fate, only remarking to her mother that they must be very careful, or that they would find themselves in Coldbath Fields prison.

Madame Merton assented to this. "It shows you, my dear," she said, "how extremely careful we should be. Don't commit yourself, and don't sign anything. Allow me to observe that it is not good *ton* to speak to a woman with chronic rheumatism (and that woman your own mother) of Coldbath Fields. It is sufficient of itself to bring on a violent lumbar attack."

"Well, mamma, I trust you, and I will do everything you tell me. I have given you very much trouble in my life, and I will try to be dutiful now."

"The result of which, my dear, will be that we shall probably end our days in jail. English jails are, I believe, very insufferable, but they cannot possibly be worse than the streets of London. In jail, my dear, there are neither shoeblacks, costermongers, nor whistling boys. If they place a shoeblack outside my cell, I have about me, in my stockings, the means of putting an end to an existence which Providence evidently had decided to have lasted too long."

"But you don't carry poison in your stockings, mamma," said Mrs. Arnaud, anxiously.

"Far from it, my dear. I only speak as a milliner. From my knowledge of textile fabrics I could hang myself in my stockings most dexterously, that is all."

"I could easily cut you down, mamma," said Mrs. Arnaud, anxious to keep the old lady in good humour.

"My dear, no," she replied. "I get my stockings from a

French firm, not from an English one. Go down and see if Lord Festiniog has gone."

The report was that Lord Festiniog had been gone a long time. That Lord Rhyader had been there with Barri. That Clotilde was waiting supper, and that everything was quiet. Madame Merton descended to the little back-parlour in better humour than she had been in for some years.

The aged female warrior scented a battle. The quarrel was none of hers, but the fighting was by no means less pleasant for that. In the Middle Ages Italians, Germans, Poles, Swiss, nay even it is said English, Scotch, and Irish, used to take part in wars with which they had logically no connection whatever. Mr. Dugald Dalgetty had no personal quarrel with any human being, and had very few political ideas. Madame Merton wished well to her species, but she liked fighting them. She was hungering for a battle when she came down to supper. She had made a grand *pax* with Mrs. Arnaud, which she intended to keep—in the first place because she really admired her; in the second place because she had got to love her; and in the third place because she was dead afraid of her. She argued that from her late conduct you could never tell what Mary Arnaud would do next; she was like a fire or torpedo ship, and Madame Merton wished to be in command.

At the same time it was not to be supposed that the old lady had got rid of her temper all at once; she wanted an object for it, and she discovered one in Clotilde. When she had eaten her supper she ordered off Mrs. Arnaud to pack up, and then asked Clotilde, in the presence of Rachel, who was clearing away,

"Are you going to marry Lord Festiniog?"

"No."

"Has he asked you?"

"Yes."

"You are a fool, if ever there was one in this world. All my family appear to be idiots."

Mrs. Arnaud suddenly appeared in the doorway. "Mother," she said, "what did you promise?"

"Right, child," said the old lady. "Clotilde, I am sorry for what I said. Rachel, there is the baker ringing at the door-bell. Clotilde, put me to bed, for I cannot disguise from you, my dear, that Marie and I are bound for a long journey to-morrow."

Clotilde took her aunt to bed, helped to undress her, and tucked her in. This took a considerable time, because, although the old lady was by no means "made up," yet—well—she had the habit of making a long toilet, both when she went to bed and when she got out of it.

On this occasion her toilet was assisted by a character which has scarcely appeared in these pages : Mrs. Arnaud's dog, the one which was sent to her from the religious house in which she had lived so long. Rover got on the old lady's bed when she was putting that finishing touch to her hair, which some old ladies consider necessary before they go to sleep, lest, we suppose, death should overtake them before they awake, and hurl them into eternity with their hair out of curl. Rover, we say, got on the bed and licked her face. The old woman did not hit him with her hair-brush, but spoke kindly to him. She noticed that Rachel was in the room, and asked her to put her pillow straight ; this from her was a compliment.

"A long journey to-morrow, Rachel," she said ; "and then the long journey of all. You will try to remember me kindly, Rachel, will you not ?"

Rachel was about to reply, when Mrs. Arnaud entered suddenly. She was very pale, and her eyes were a little dilated, but she was perfectly firm.

"Clotilde and Rachel, go upstairs. By this door. Leave the dog."

They went, and she sat on her mother's bed. The dog growled, but she laid her hand on his neck, and he was pacified.

"Mother ! mother !" she said. "What shall we do now ? There is a message from the sea."

"I always believed that there would be," said the old woman, rising in her bed. "I have dreamt of it, and prayed for it. Where is he ?"

"Will you let the man come in and speak for himself ?"

"What, George ?"

"No, only a sailor."

"Let him come at once," said the old lady. "A Frenchwoman who knows how to manage her complexion is afraid of no man."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHAT MADAME MERTON DID WITH HER WATCH.

Few contrasts ever seen in this world could ever have been greater than that between the old Frenchwoman sitting up in her bed, and the sailor who came into the room. Her complexion was like a

very pale rose—his was very much like a rather badly burnt brick. But they had something in common: they both had grand bold black eyes; and Mrs. Arnaud, standing in an atmosphere composed of eau de cologne on the side of her mother, and bad tobacco on the side of the sailor, came to the conclusion that neither of them were particularly afraid of anything.

"Madam," said the sailor, "I hope I see you well."

"I am rheumatic, sir," she said; "but otherwise perfectly well. I am bound for a journey to-morrow. Will you state your intelligence?"

"I come to speak of Mr. George Drummond, madam," said the sailor. "He requested me to come, in case I should escape. He said that his relations lived here, and I have done as he told me."

"You see, sir," said Madame Merton, "his grandmother and his mother, pray proceed."

"When the *Newcastle* was lost, madam, I stayed with him and with the captain. When she went down—we all three on the same piece of wreck—and a very few hours passed before we were seen by two ships. They both bore down upon us at once. One, apparently homeward bound, got nearer to us quicker than the other, but passed a little to leeward. I left the spar and struck out for her, because I wanted, as a poor man, to get home. The captain and Mr. Drummond, not being such active swimmers as I am, preferred to risk being taken up by the other ship, and I saw them both taken on her deck, apparently safe and sound. I expected to have been home long ago, but, with my usual luck, the Italian barque which picked me up lost her foremast, and was driven out into the Atlantic by the easterly wind which followed the gale. We were glad to make the west coast of France before we were right. Here I got a berth back to the Mediterranean, and telegraphed to my wife from Brest. The French people made such a mess of my English that she never understood any more than that I was alive, and as our owners had paid her as if I was dead, she didn't bother them. But, to make a long story short, both the captain and Mr. Drummond were taken safe on board an outward bound ship."

"But did she not signal her name?" said sharp Madame Merton.

"She did, madam, but I fairly tell you that if she had I should not have remembered it. I was very much knocked about by the sea. I can only repeat that Mr. Drummond was perfectly safe when I saw him last."

"On board the outward bound ship?" said Madame Merton.

"By no means, madam. I have seen Mr. Drummond since. I have seen him at Bordeaux. He is coming to England as fast as he can, but his leg was broken, it seems, and, for some reason or another, he seems in no hurry."

"There is no great reason for him to hurry," said Madame Merton. "Well, sir, we are very much obliged to you. Would you kindly accept my watch? It is a Brequet, and of no use to you, I dare say, but you can exchange it for an English chronometer, you know. So, good-bye."

"Stop one moment, sir, said Mrs. Arnaud, speaking to the sailor, with Madame's watch in his hand.

"Did Mr. Drummond tell you by what route he was coming home? I am his mother, and I wish to see him."

"I can tell you that, madam, I think," said the sailor. "He was coming through the Alps, and down the Rhine." And so the sailor departed.

"What are we to do now, mother?" said Mrs. Arnaud. "Is there any use for my trying to intercept him?"

"Not the remotest, my dear. He would be of no earthly use in any way whatever. You and I have to commit what the world would call a crime together; and, to tell you the truth, I would rather that your son was out of the way at this moment. He is alive, and that is enough for you. Let him go. You and I must hunt in couples, and get that paper back. I think we owe that to the family. We will start to-morrow morning."

The intelligence of the declaration of a most bloody war, or the result of a University boat-race, generally arrives at some parts of Her Majesty's dominions long before the fact has scientifically taken place. The telegraph has set back the dial of Ahaz. Science triumphs when she tells us that things are known in Constantinople before they have (chronologically) happened in England. The sun is too slow for us. The University race is, according to Calcutta time, rowed at midnight, and they get the result of it on their breakfast-tables in the early morning, just when our children are being put to bed.

Mrs. Arnaud and Madame Merton started early in the morning to catch Carlina, and bargain with her about the lost paper. Neither of them had travelled very much, and they thought that they were making good speed.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MADAME MERTON DEFEATS ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA.

IN due course of time they arrived at St. Goar. Madame had behaved very well, and was singularly gracious. She occasionally showed slight symptoms of rheumatism by giving wild yells in improper places, but she was very amiable. At Aix-la-Chapelle she howled in the middle of high mass, and being asperged with holy water by a priest on her back, for the purpose, as he afterwards explained, of driving the evil spirit out of her, shook her fist in secret, and said words about the Roman hierarchy which we decline to repeat, both on religious and on political grounds. Ultramontane as madame most emphatically was, she uttered words which are more fitly left, in our opinion, to the ear of her spiritual director than to that of our readers. She simply expressed her opinion about the too liberal use of holy water in a way which might have satisfied the gentleman who is traditionally supposed to have an extreme horror of it in any form. The fact is, that she referred the ministering priest personally to that gentleman. It was a mistake on her part, clearly; but we only say that Madame Merton behaved, for her, like an angel.

Mary Arnaud was always good-natured. She was a trifle colourless, perhaps, but she was always resolute enough and good-natured enough. She had a way of viewing life which was a little different to that of ordinary people. Nothing would ever have induced her to commit a crime for herself, but she did not hesitate to do anything very strange indeed for those she loved, and who had been kind to her. Of course she ought to have been a heroine, and have refused to act in the matter of this paper; but alas! she was no more of a heroine than old Madame Merton, who would, now her blood was up, have most willingly injured Carlina and half-a-dozen more people who stood in her way.

You are angry with Lord Festiniog. He behaved shamefully, there is no doubt about that. His duty was perfectly clear. He should never have concealed that paper, in which he believed. He should have done his duty. He should have put it in the hands of the family, and have gone out into the world a beggar; leaving Rhyader, his wife, Barri, and George Drummond without one solitary penny in the world. But he was a very immoral old man, and he did not see his way to doing it.

It may be supposed that, with an honest old gentleman like Lord Festiniog, there was some mental struggle about the matter.

That he thought he was doing wrong, is perfectly certain, but there was no mental struggle whatever. He was called upon, as he thought, to give up so many thousands a year, which his family had enjoyed, not entirely without benefit to the State, for two centuries. He determined most emphatically not to do it, and he invoked a malediction on his own head, similar, though rather stronger than that used by Madame Merton in the Dom Kirk of Aachen, if he did anything of the kind.

His idea was that the deed would be brought to him, and that he could buy it. He had a faith about that, because the deed was worth more to him than to any one else. He let the two women go to see what they could discover, and, with a degree of cowardice, stopped at home himself, to see what they could do.

The women were avenged on him ; they had considerably better times than he had. Had that excellent old lady, Madame Merton, known, while she was travelling up the Rhine with her daughter, what a tremendous pickle Lord Festiniog was in at No. 17, I am afraid that her amiability would have become angelic. It was one of the great points in that sainted woman's character that she was always most cheerful when she saw her fellow-creatures in distress. She would have *loved* Lord Festiniog had she known the state of affairs at No. 17. She would have given him money. She would have lent him her air-cushion. She would have sat by his bedside till he swore at her, and then have sat like a saint. Alas ! she never saw Lord Festiniog in his agony. She would have given all she was worth for it, but it was denied her.

They arrived at St. Goar. Mrs. Arnaud took rooms, and then went to see the doctor. He was in his room, and she knocked at the door. They interchanged greetings, but Mrs. Arnaud saw at once that the doctor was cool.

There was a little indifferent conversation about the death of James Drummond, and then she said,

"I have come mainly about my poor brother's papers and effects."

"Mrs. Arnaud," he said, "I am very sorry to say that I cannot put myself in communication with you on the subject. Before I give up one single paper you must swear before the Mayor that you are his sister."

"I can't do that," said Mrs. Arnaud, promptly. "I would if I could, but I cannot. I am not his sister. Now you have the whole truth."

"Good!" said the doctor. "Are you any relation to him?"

"No. May I look through his things?"

The doctor hesitated, and then said,

"Mrs. Arnaud, you inspire such confidence, that I will do wrong and say yes."

"God bless you for that," said Mary Arnaud. "Come, I will tell you this much of the truth. The man loved me, but I could never love him. He did me the most irreparable wrong that man could do to woman, yet I was kind to him at last."

"Most kind. He did not marry you?"

"Sir," she said, "you utterly mistake me. He did me a wrong inconceivably greater than the one of which you are thinking. He got me away alone after Ittyd's death, and he stole my child, with the assistance of that woman, Carlina, who is here now. It was done at Ravenna, and that woman knows it. I forgave him because he, for my sake, brought the boy up as his own son; and the boy is alive, and, I hope, will live to comfort my old age."

"Will you, Mrs. Arnaud," said the doctor, "kindly tell me what you wish me to do? Yours is a very singular story, and I have the very firmest faith in it. But, my dear madam, the last time you left here you carried away a large number of his papers; and I would greatly prefer the presence of a notary before you go through his effects."

"My dear doctor, you are stronger than I am, and I am not likely to *steal* any of his papers. Let us, by all means, have a notary, and I will go through them with you."

"I shall be most happy to do so," said the doctor. "But you spoke just now of the woman Carlina. She has left this place."

"Yes?"

"Yes; she has gone, I believe, to England, but I am not sure. However, if you will wait, I will send for the notary, and do as you desire."

"May my mother be present, doctor?"

"Surely, Mrs. Arnaud, I will agree to that."

The notary came, the effects were examined, but the paper was not to be discovered.

The poor man had brought away nearly seven thousand pounds with him, that was found perfectly secure; but there was no trace whatever of the important document. The notary got a little impatient.

"Mrs. Arnaud," he said, in perfectly good English, "you, under pretence of being the dead man's sister, carried off to England his papers. That is a matter which you cannot deny."

This was turning the tables with a vengeance.

"I took away the papers which he gave me," said Mary Arnaud.

"My dear madam, that is no answer."

"I don't know anything about answers," said Mrs. Arnaud.

"I wish I had never come here."

"That is likely, madam. You confess to having carried off his papers under false pretences. I am afraid I must ask the Mayor to put you under arrest. It seems rather a black case. It was a terribly black case," the notary continued, in the Continental fashion of believing every one to be guilty until they were found innocent, unlike our similar procedure, which is radically different. "You took away the dead man's papers, and have, it seems, returned for one which you missed. What was that paper?"

"Am I under examination?" said Mary Arnaud.

"No."

"Then why do you assume all this against me? What right have you to do it? Be quiet until I send for my mother."

Madame Merton was not long in coming. The Frenchwoman faced the Prussian as the Ophiophagus Elaps faces the Cobra. She, at all events, had never forgiven the advance of Blucher from Ligny to Waterloo, though she had long ago forgiven the English, Scotch, and Irish for standing in that rain of iron for so many hours, and, in fact, considered Wellington only inferior to Buonaparte and Moreau. She was nearly old enough to have heard of Rossbach. She faced the Prussian notary with what may be called, without disrespect, an evil eye.

"What have you been saying to my daughter?" she asked, stamping her stick upon the ground.

"I have been saying, madame, that your daughter has removed Mr. Drummond's papers before his death, and has carried them to England. She has represented herself as his sister, and now confesses that she is nothing of the kind, that, under the Prussian law, is what you call in England felony. We cannot disguise from ourselves, madame, that she has returned to seek a paper which she missed, and we must detain her."

"Did the dead man," said Madame Merton, slowly, "give her a receipt in full, witnessed by the doctor, for all the papers she took?"

"He certainly did," said the doctor.

"We can produce the document," said Madame Merton, "but that is of very little matter. We *have* come back to recover a paper which belonged to the dead man, and which was certainly in his possession, as we know. Now, I want to ask you two scoundrels, you, Prussian notary, and you, quack English doctor, what you have done with it between you? I have more money

than you two put together, and I will hunt you from one court to another. What have you done with it? You have not a leg to stand on. If my daughter was dishonest, would she have come back here to seek it? You have the paper between you, and if there was law in Prussia, I would make you give it up; but I will take uncommonly good care, doctor, to denounce you in England as a swindler."

To say that Mrs. Arnaud was taken by surprise by her mother's flank movement is to say nothing. She had had so many surprises in this world that another was nothing to her. I am sorry to say about my very dear friend that she was pretending to weep behind her handkerchief, while she was choking with laughter, about the way in which her mother had turned the enemies' flank. She thought that the conclusion was the best.

"Gentlemen," she said, rising and whisking her handkerchief. "I am an old woman, near my grave. You have been tempted, doubtless, as many of us have, and you have yielded to temptation. I am a woman of business. You have the document I require here; I am rich, and I will give you a thousand sovereigns for it."

And so she marched off to bed. The Englishman and the Prussian were no match for the old Frenchwoman. She had entirely beaten them, and the doctor only desired to get her out of the house. There was no more talk of arrest; and when Mrs. Arnaud was putting her mother to bed, she mildly remonstrated with her.

"Mamma, you went too far."

"You can never do that, my dear. I have played the low insular game of cribbage, and if you peg too far you may be detected and have to go back; but you will find, if you raise a sufficient argument, that your adversary in the next hand will not play well, and so you gain in any way."

"But, mamma, were you right in saying those dreadful things about them?"

"My dear, they have not got the paper. Besides, even if they had, I offered them a thousand pounds for it, and they neither of them had presence of mind to refuse. That in England would be twenty years' penal servitude for either of them. Their tongues are tied."

"I wonder where the paper is," said Mrs. Arnaud.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ONE SMALL FLAME GOES OUT.

It is very painful for the present writer to speak of the fearful disasters which came down so suddenly on the most venerated head of Lord Festiniog. Of course, our moral readers will quarrel with us at once when we say that he was a good old fellow, and that there really was no harm in him. He wanted to possess the property, and he believed in the validity of a certain document, which was not worth the paper on which it was written.

He let the two women, Mrs. Arnaud and Madame Merton, go to St. Goar to see if they could recover it. That was extremely wrong. They made an utter failure, which served him right. Still, Nemesis punished him somewhat heavily; for the woman, Carlina, had taken the paper straight to Lord Rhyader, and before she had been with him half an hour, George Drummond had arrived from Marseilles.

Lord Rhyader—who was now in the House—was among pyramids of blue-books. He was thinking about making a speech, which has never been made. He heard a rustle in his study, and swore under his breath. Seeing that it was only his valet, he kept his temper.

"An Italian woman wishes to see your lordship," said the valet.

"Am I an organ-grinder man," said Lord Rhyader, "that you should talk to me of an Italian woman?"

"You had better see her, my lord. It is that woman, Carlina."

"Oh, I see. Send her up."

Up came the Italian woman, and went straight to the point. She told Lord Rhyader very much which he had guessed, but a great deal which he did not know. She pointed out that she had a certain paper in her possession, which deprived the Festiniog part of the family of all their inheritance, and gave it to the Killigrews.

"May I see this paper?" he asked Carlina.

"No, my lord, it is in safer hands than mine."

"You will give me time for deliberation, will you not?" said Lord Rhyader.

"I can only give you two hours," said Carlina.

"I am all abroad over this matter," said Lord Rhyader. "I wish for advice. Could you possibly meet me in two hours from this time, at No. 17, Hartley Street, Cavendish Square?"

Carlina hesitated, and looked at him. At last she said,
"The English word is to be trusted. Will you swear to me,
from being assassinated in that horrible house?"

Lord Rhyader gave his word to her. He said,

"I do not quite understand what you mean. No. 17 is pleasantly
remembered by some of our family."

"Your family are idiots," she replied. "Mrs. Arnaud,
Madame Merton, Clotilde, and Heloise, are all Jesuits. Every
one."

"Well, my dear madam," said Lord Rhyader, "I will see you
safe through your visit. Do not fail us."

Lord Rhyader went at once to No. 17; the door was opened
by Rachel; he was shown into the back-parlour by Clotilde;
and there sat, looking extremely tired and worn, George Drum-
mond.

"Nephew George," said Lord Rhyader, "we all thought that
you were drowned. We are very glad to find that it is not the
case."

"Uncle Rhyader," said George Arnaud, "it would have been
better had I been drowned. I risked my life to save your boy.
That is acknowledged?"

"Most fully, my dear Arnaud. God knows how fully."

"Have I omitted any duty to your family?"

"Certainly none."

"Suppose I were to tell you that there was no family; that
we were beggars and impostors. What would you do?"

"I suppose that the woman Carlina has been with you?" said
Lord Rhyader.

"Well, she has."

"What do you propose to do, George Arnaud?" said Lord
Rhyader.

"Give up everything," said George Arnaud. "Put the thing
in Chancery, and let the estate pay, if you like."

"Quite my idea," said Lord Rhyader. "But my father, Lord
Festiniog. What would he do?"

It was rather an alarming question, because Lord Festiniog
happened to walk into the room-at that moment, looking exactly
as if nothing was the matter, whereas he perfectly well knew that
a very great deal was the matter. He had heard of George
Arnaud's arrival, and was very glad, apparently, to see him. He
had something on his mind: something which put everything
else in the shade. The arrival of George Arnaud was nothing
now.

"I am glad that you are here, sir," said Lord Rhyader;

"there is this woman Carlina, who seems to have a great deal more to do with our family than I like, coming; she, it seems, holds some deed which utterly disinherits and ruins us. Do you know anything about it?"

"Yes, I do," said Lord Festiniog. "I encouraged Mary Arnaud and Madame Merton to go to Germany, and try to secure it."

"Is the document of any value?" asked Lord Rhyader.

"Of the greatest value," said Lord Festiniog. "We are beggars without it. We must make terms with the woman, Rhyader, or we shall be in the workhouse."

"Neither I nor George Arnaud will do anything of the kind, sir. What relations have you made over this matter with Mrs. Arnaud and Madame Merton?"

"They were very brief, Rhyader. I think that I was not to blame very much. You should not be angry with me just now."

Lord Festiniog looked peculiarly troubled.

"You have," said Lord Rhyader, "entered into some compact with those two women about this Italian woman's paper. I and George Arnaud will have nothing to do with it. I, for my part, curse it."

"Rhyader!" said Lord Festiniog, drawing himself up, "do not curse your father's actions."

"Why not, my lord?" said Lord Rhyader.

"Because you have no son left to curse your own. Barri died two hours ago."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TEMPTED ONCE TOO OFTEN.

"So Barri is dead!" said George Arnaud. "I am most deeply sorry. I risked my life for him, and I could do no more. Lord Rhyader, you will bear me out in that fact."

"Certainly. Barri dead? Yes! Well! God afflicts us sorely. Why, heaven help us, all the property would have gone to you, George Arnaud."

"My dear Rhyader," said Lord Festiniog, "have you no other word to say when I tell you of the death of your son?"

"Everything which is affectionate I will say or write down. But I fancy the boy is better out of the world than in it."

"Why?" said Lord Festiniog.

"Because he would be a beggar, like the rest of us. He will be an angel in heaven."

"Do you mean to give up everything, sir?" said Lord Festiniog, turning on George Arnaud savagely. "I ask you: do you mean to do it, and retire once more into the original beggary from which you were rescued? Are you going to follow that ass, noodle, and prig of a son of mine in his curses, or are you going to behave like a man?"

"Let us come outside and talk, Lord Festiniog," said George Arnaud.

They went out into the shop, among the dresses, and Lord Festiniog said,

"My dear George Arnaud, I want to put a matter before you, and to put it without temper. I lost my temper just now with my son, and I apologise for it. There is no doubt that your putative father was a great scoundrel, and that long after he was married he behaved very badly to your mother. Now, he got possession of a certain document, which would disinherit the whole of us, and the woman Carlina has it in her possession. Under these circumstances, I ask you, as a moral young man, what is to be done?"

George Arnaud—that most moral, excellent, and admirable young man—sat down in a chair in the shop at No. 17, and thought. At last he spoke.

"My lord," he said, "I have thought through the matter once more" (had he?) "and I think that on the whole I would buy the document from the woman. I think that it would be best."

Lord Festiniog spoke again.

"George Arnaud," he said, "do you see this? Neither Rhyader nor myself will ever marry again. You will take my title and my estates without any dispute. It is in your interest that the paper should be got hold of and destroyed, as much as any one else's. Do you agree to its being done?"

"Rhyader might object."

"Fudge!" said Lord Festiniog, "I am not going to consult that noodle. You have got to decide whether you will be a beggar or a peer. I know that the woman is coming here directly. Say the word."

"Why does not your lordship say it yourself?"

"Because it is a matter of entire indifference to me, personally. There will be a grand lawsuit, but plenty of money to keep me

comfortably. As for Rhyader; I don't care for him very much. I have liked you better lately. Come, decide."

"I would buy the paper of the woman, then, my lord."

Lord Festiniog was standing behind George Arnaud, and so he could not see the look of intense scorn which was on the lord's face. He said,

"It is felony, mind you, and you are concerned in it with me."

George Arnaud said, quietly, "I am in good company, my lord."

"Then we will both go to hell together," said Lord Festiniog.

The speech startled George Arnaud for a moment. He had meant to be very pure over the matter, but he had changed his mind. With Lord Rhyader he was trying to do his duty; with Lord Festiniog he was prevented from doing it. Lord Festiniog—he, George Arnaud, was the future Lord Festiniog; and from the contemplation of that fact his morality suffered.

I do not wish to dwell on what happened almost immediately at No. 17. The Italian woman, Carlina, came with her paper, accompanied by her relatives, probably either bandits or organ-grinders: George Arnaud declares that they were the latter. She gave Lord Festiniog the paper, which was not worth a shilling, and he paid her one thousand pounds in bank-notes. When she was gone, George Arnaud and he solemnly burnt that paper, and Lord Rhyader politely declined to know anything about the matter.

George Arnaud had been tempted once too often, and had fallen.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

I AM afraid that our story has been very immoral, and that every character in it, with the exception of the two young French ladies, Heloise and Clotilde, and of Lady Rhyader, ought to be picking oakum in Coldbath Fields. The writer has not a single word to say for any one of them, except that he likes them, as some people have been known to love extremely naughty children of either sex.

It is possible, however, that the reader may like to hear how the judgments of Nemesis overtook the gang of miscreants of which the writer has attempted to give a sketch. Although they were all engaged more or less in a misprision of felony, no remarkable judgments overtook them.

Madame Merton's rheumatism and obstinacy caused her to remain in Paris during the siege, where it has been affirmed that she ate her cat. That is totally untrue, because her cat is at No. 17 to this day. What became of Mrs. Arnaud's pet dog, who certainly went into Paris, and equally certainly never came out again, we don't know. Since the Commune business, Madame Merton had settled in England permanently, as she intended to do several times before. Her conversation is charming, but she objects to any mention of the siege of Paris, unless she has all the conversation to herself.

She says that the behaviour of the Germans was extremely odious, but that all the Germans in creation were less detestable than Madame Virmesch, who induced her husband to ruin trade in Paris. She says that M. Virmesch was a "*bon garçon*," ruined by his wife. The Communists, she adds, had no taste for colour. The red, which they so abundantly used, was extremely raw, and by no means of the right tint. When madame is examined on the subject of French politics she is rather puzzling. She is not Cæsarist, because she says that the lady of Chiselhurst had never any taste in ribands, though she was in other ways a most admirable lady. "What," says Madame Merton, "are you to do with a great lady who wears round her neck English eau de Nile from Coventry?" In fact, Madame Merton has quarrelled with the Imperial family on the subject of dress. She has also had a few very decisive words with Madame MacMahon on the same subject; and Madame MacMahon has had to yield, at least so it is said. Mrs. Grant's head-dress was reported to her correspondent as being objectionable. She at once wrote to the President of the United States. Nay, more: our own Queen had on one day a bonnet which, as Madame Merton thought, did not suit her; and Madame Merton at once wrote off to say that she would be glad of an interview. It was not granted, and No. 17 remained without royal patronage.

But No. 17 flourished strangely. There was a curious atmosphere about it which attracted certain people. There was no one ever came there who was not in some sense a sinner; but then who is blameless? The people who came there were people who were tired of the world, and who were waiting for death. They had all of them more money than they knew how to dispose

of; but they were tired of the world, and wished to be out of it. Lord Rhyader expressed this opinion first, and Lord Festiniog rebuked him, but Mary Arnaud and Madame Merton backed him up.

"Why need we live?" said Mrs. Arnaud. "I have lived three lives, and I am tired."

"Why were we ever born?" said Madame Merton. "For art? Nonsense. For politics? Once more, nonsense. To reproduce ourselves? Again, nonsense. There is my daughter, is she in any way worthy of me? Yes, my darling, you are worth fifty of me. Don't mind the old woman. How much happier we shall be when we are dead!"

Lord Festiniog was not certain about that. He considered that we did not know enough about the next world.

George Arnaud backed Lord Festiniog, and the conversation changed, although from time to time it was renewed for some few years.

Lord Rhyader was, singularly enough, the first to go. He took to his bed, stayed there, and died. His last words were very solemnly spoken. "Giraldus Cambrensis," he said, "was the founder of our house. He was a Churchman, and I want no scandal in the family; but I would sooner have the bar sinister on our arms than deny the fact. He was head of the Barris. As for the Irish Barrys—there——" Those were his lordship's last words.

It was some time before Madame Merton went that Clotilde took the veil. D'Arcy had come into a great deal of money, and he and Heloise were spinning about in the world like a couple of teetotums. Madame Merton, as D'Arcy and his wife averred, had asked Lord Festiniog to marry her, and his lordship had declined, though with the greatest politeness, urging age, which madame said was of no consequence at all.

However, they were not married, and Madame Merton died. In reality she was killed by her rheumatism, but she declared that her death-blow came from seeing a great lady in blue silk with rubies. "Whatever you may say of the Buonapartists, they would never have done *that*." And so she closed her eyes, and never opened them any more. We fancy, after all, that she died in the Buonapartist faith; and in the end only a very high Catholic. There are many worse old women in the world than Madame Merton, when all is said and done, though the present writer would much rather be her biographer than her spiritual director.

We were in Westminster Hall a few days ago, when we saw a

woman in deep mourning talking to a very tall young man. Both of them had their backs towards us, but I was perfectly certain that there were not three women in England who could carry themselves in the way of the lady in mourning. We approached, and they turned. We saw before us Mrs. Arnaud and a young gentleman, tall, gaunt, and melancholy, whom we did not recognise—a man with a large beard, ill trimmed, with a bronzed face—a man who frowned at you, but did not scowl.

"My dear sir," said Mrs. Arnaud, "I want to get into the House of Commons; can you tell me any one who would help me? My son says that it is difficult to-night. Let me introduce you. My son, Lord Festiniog."

"Lord Festiniog?" I said. "You don't mean to say that the dear old man is dead? I have been in Scotland, and have never heard of it."

We went into a recess between the Hall and the lobby of the House of Commons, and she told us of it. The old fellow had died in his chair one morning, and his last words had been, "Divine Providence is mysterious, when it permits the increase of the human race. What does it all mean? Merely misery, sorrow, and sin. Now I am going to be happy."

Lord Festiniog, whilom George Drummond, came up, took his mother's arm, and led her away. "You will make an excellent peer," thought we; "but I liked the dear old fellow better than I shall ever like you."

THE END.



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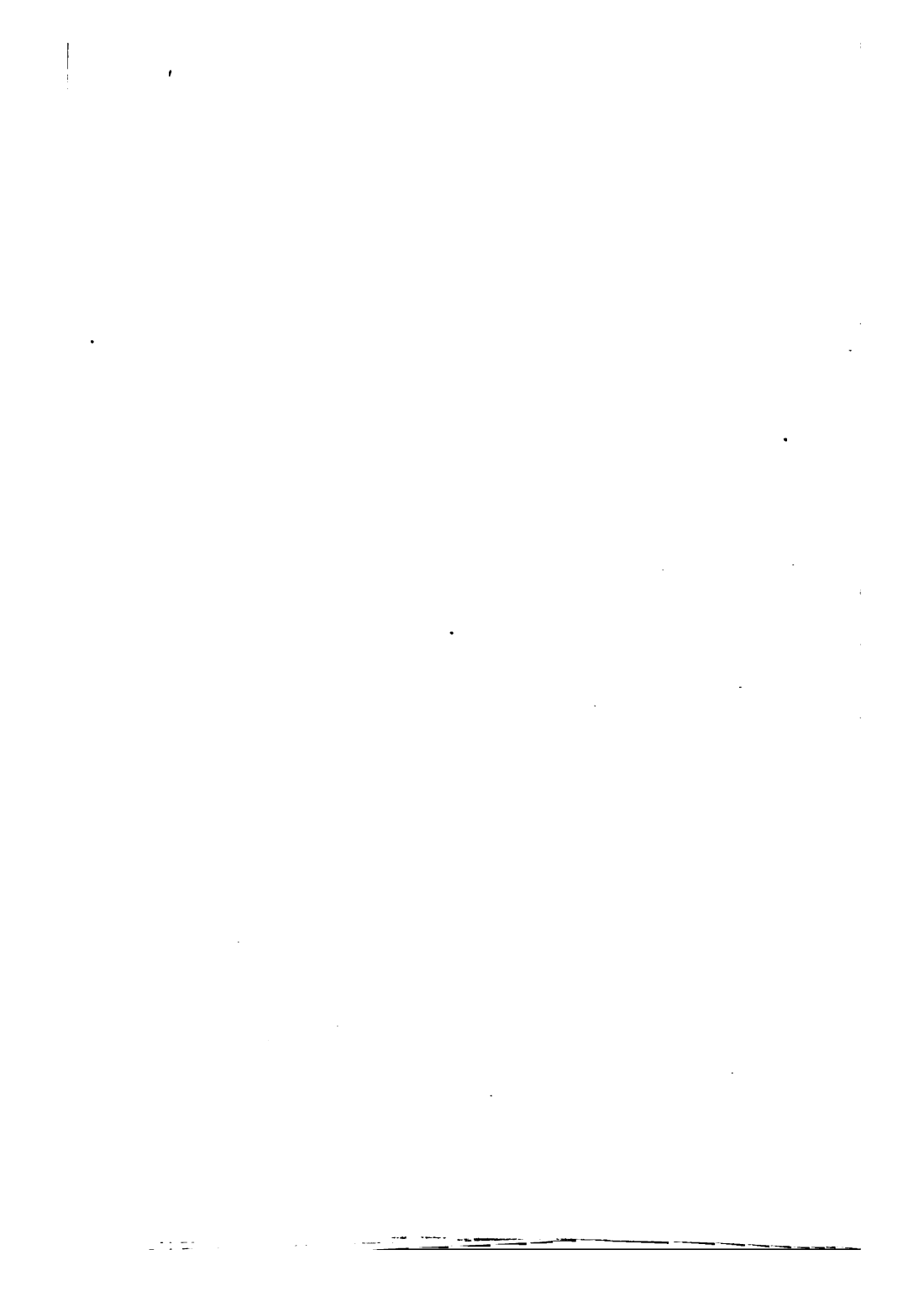


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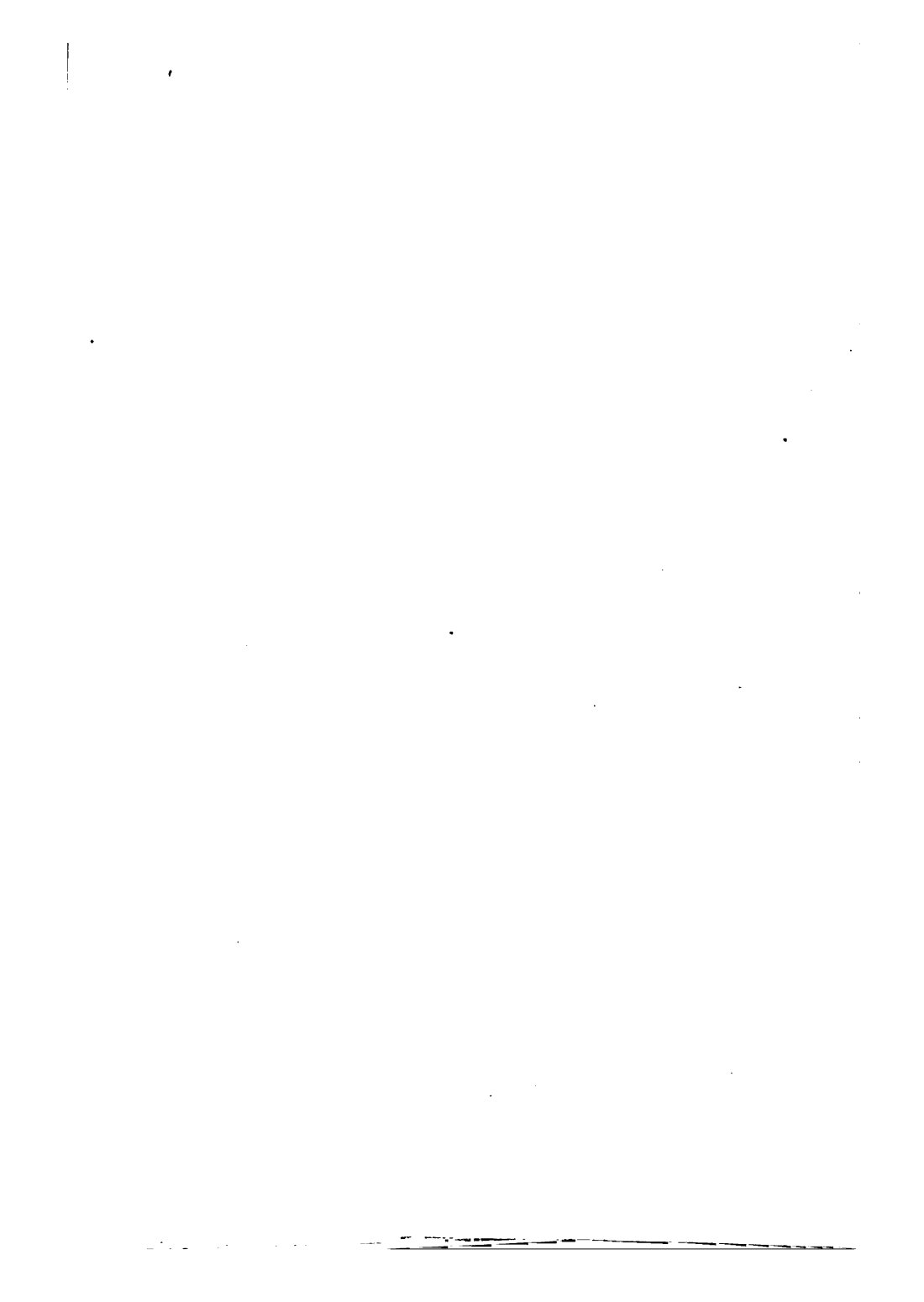


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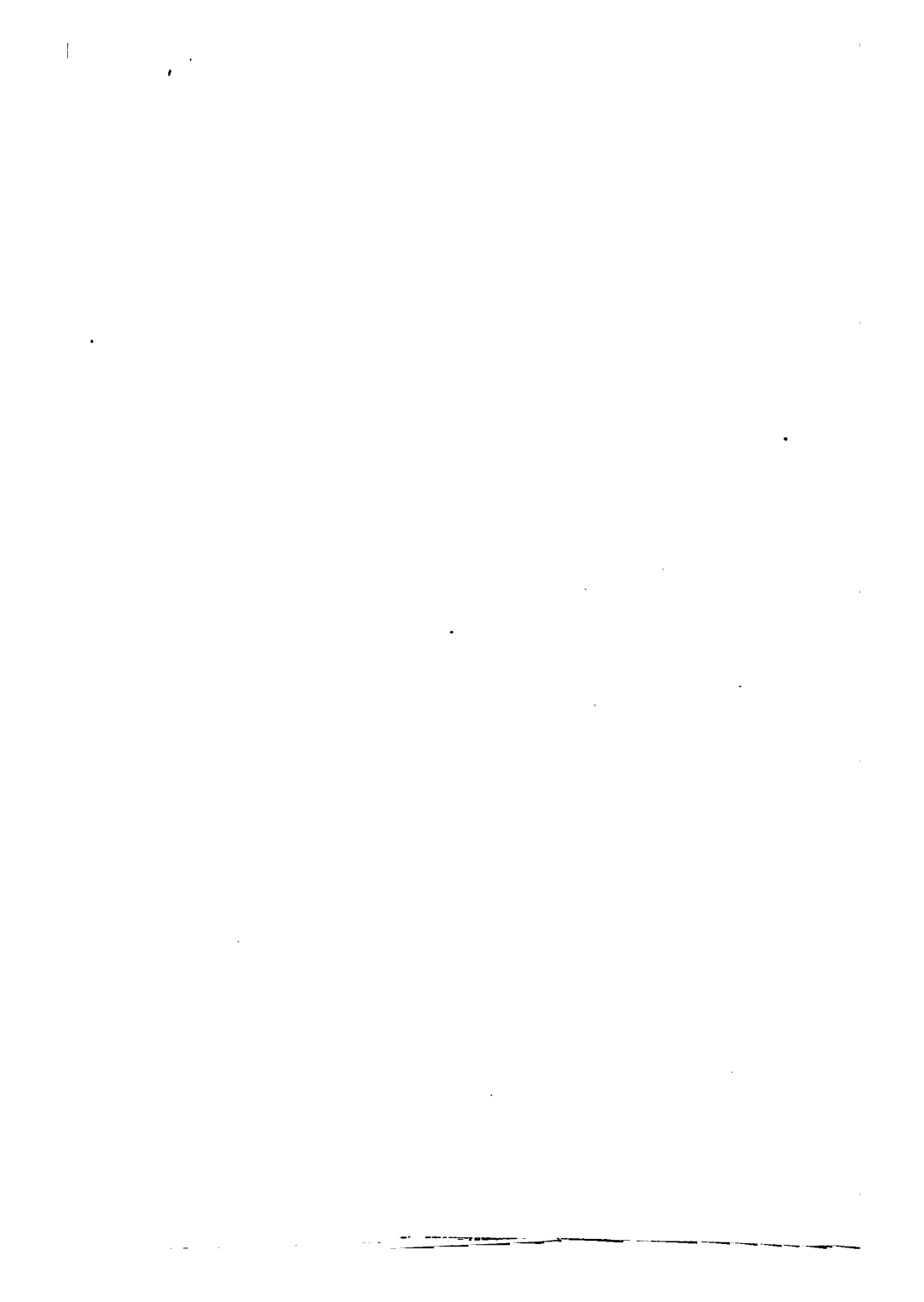


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